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COLLECTION

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TRACTS.

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| <p>I. A Dissertation on 2 Theff. ii. 1, ---- 12: In which it is shown, that <i>the Bishop of Rome is the man of sin, &c.</i></p> <p>II. A letter to a friend, concerning the end and design of prayer. Or the reasonableness of praying to an unchangeably wise, powerful and good God. In answer to the objections of the <i>modern infidels.</i></p> <p>III. A postscript to the letter on prayer, concerning the views which we ought to have in praying; the drawing up proper forms; the use of scripture language; the confession of such sins only, as we are conscious we have been guilty of.</p> | <p>IV. The 30th dissertation of <i>Maximus Tyrius</i>, concerning this question, <i>Whether we ought to pray to God, or no?</i>
Translated from the <i>Greek.</i></p> <p>V. Remarks on the foregoing dissertation of <i>Maximus Tyrius.</i></p> <p>VI. The doctrine of predestination reviewed. Or the nature of the councils and decrees of God; and the rise and occasion of the scripture language concerning them.</p> <p>VII. A brief account of <i>Calvin's</i> causing <i>Servetus</i> to be burned, at <i>Geneva</i>, for an heretic.</p> |
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The THIRD EDITION, corrected and enlarged.

To which are now added, by way of SUPPLEMENT.

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| <p>VIII. A Defence of the Brief account of <i>Calvin's</i> treatment of <i>Servetus</i>.</p> <p>IX. A brief account of <i>Archbishop Laud's</i> cruel treatment of Dr.</p> | <p><i>Leighton.</i></p> <p>X. An essay, concerning the belief of things, which are above reason. And,
A general preface.</p> |
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By GEORGE BENSON, D.D.

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by J. WAUGH, in *Gracechurch-street*;
J. NOON, in *Cheapside*; A. MILLAR, in the *Strand*;
J. DAVIDSON, in the *Poultry*; R. KING, in
Fore-street; M. COOPER, in *Pater-noster-Row*; and
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THE GENERAL
P R E F A C E

To this COLLECTION of

T R A C T S.



HERE have already been two editions of seven of the following Tracts, printed separately. And, by the advice of some friends, they are now collected into one volume, with some additions and alterations.

A popish Priest (as it was thought) wrote against the Psalter's-Hall Anti-popish Sermons. And he published at the end of that work, — “ An extract out of Bishop Montague's appeal, (Chap. V. p. 149, &c.) concerning Mahomet; offered to the consideration of Mr. Chandler, and of The Author of The Dissertation, on 2 Thess. ii.” Bishop Montague's character, and his great leaning towards Popery, are very well known. And, indeed, whoever would have made interest at Court, and stood fair for preferment, in that reign; when a Popish Queen bore so great a sway, could not take a more effectual method; than by attempting to prove, that the Pope was not Antichrist, The man of sin,

or the tyrannical and oppressive power prophesied of, in holy scripture: who would apostatize from pure Christianity; corrupt the religion of Jesus; and persecute the true professors of it.

The consequences of the spread of Popery are so horrible; and our danger, from the detestable and unprovoked rebellion 1745, is so fresh in our minds; the zeal of Popish emissaries is so great, and their diligence (after repeated disappointments) so constant, restless and unwearyed, that Protestant divines should never be off their guard; but ought to take all fair methods of fortifying the minds of their own people; and guarding them against that amazing apostasy, and every tendency thereto.

Our first reformers were convinced that this grand corruption of the pure religion of Jesus was plainly foretold. And accordingly, they made use of this, as one argument, among many others, to overthrow Popery; and to confirm the Protestant religion, and the free use of the scriptures.

This continued to be the prevailing opinion of the greatest and best of our English divines, till the latter end of the reign of King James the first. But then, our Princes, marrying into popish families, gave a check to this sort of language; and rendered the opinion quite ungenteel and unfashionable. It was not the way to preferment; nor looked upon, as a proper complaisance to the Court, to point out the Bishop of Rome as the man of sin, &c. And
Bishop

The PREFACE.

Bishop Montague was among the most forward and zealous to beat down such an opinion. He, therefore, racked his invention to prove Mahomet to be the person, and not the Pope. But (though, by such methods, he rose to a Bishoprick, and was a favorite divine at court) his arguments are nevertheless vain and inconclusive. For,

(1.) *Suppose Constantinople to stand upon seven hills. It is notorious that antient Rome did so likewise. And Constantinople was not the city, which then reigned over the Kings of the earth. Whereas these two marks were both united in St. John's prophetic description of spiritual Babylon; the seat of idolatry, persecution, and all manner of vice, Rev. xvii. 9; 18.*

(2.) *This man of sin was prophesied of, as one that would come with all power, and signs, and lying wonders. Now the learned men among the Mahometans allow that their prophet worked no miracles; and Mahomet himself, in the Koran, lays no claim to them. Whereas the pretences to miracles, in the Church of Rome, are notorious and numberlesse.*

(3.) *If authorities could signifie any thing, we might confront the authority of Bishop Montague, not only with that of the great and incomparable Sir Isaac Newton, and a vast number of the most learned and best of the Protestant divines; but even with that of Estius, who was a more learned man than Bishop Montague, and a professed Papist. For, in his*
notes

*notes on 1 John ii. 22. he expressly declares,
 " that Mahomet could not be the Antichrist,
 " spoken of, in Scripture, as appears from
 " 2 Theff. ii. For he neither pretended to be
 " a God; nor was his coming with all pow-
 " er, and signs, and lying wonders, &c."*

*However, we rely on the strength of our ar-
 guments, and not on any mere human authority
 whatever.*

*The first edition of the Letter on prayer was
 translated into high-dutch, at Vienna, about
 ten or eleven years ago; with a recommendatory
 preface; — by the reverend and learned Dr.
 Kortholt, who is now a Professor of Divinity,
 in the university of Gottingen, in the Electo-
 rate of Hanover.*

*In the second edition, there were a great
 many additions and alterations. In this third
 edition, there are some few corrections and alte-
 rations, which were not in either of the former
 editions.*

*The texts, relating to election and reprobation,
 deserve to be more critically examined
 than I have yet seen. But enough has been said
 to lead Christians into the proper interpretation.
 And, indeed, the generality of Christians, a-
 mong us, seem now to be fully satisfied, that
 absolute and unconditional election and re-
 probation are not the doctrines, either of right
 reason, or of holy scripture.*

If

The PREFACE.

vii.

If 2500, which I take to be about a fourth part, of the Jews, in and about this great city, were to be converted to Christianity: And, in order to their joining in communion with one, or more, of our Christian churches, should insist upon it, that the English Christians should be circumcised, and take on them the observation of the Law of Moses, as well as that of the gospel of Christ: — Then the old controversie, which made such a noise in the apostles days, would be revived; and the Epistles of St. Paul (particularly to the Romans and to the Galatians) would be understood with more clearnesse and emphasis, than they have been commonly, in these later ages of the Christian church.

But as, at present, this is not likely to obtain in fact, we must suppose things in such a situation; and keep that supposition in view, as constantly and clearly as we are able: And then we shall not misse of the scope of the Apostle's reasoning.

The brief account of Calvin's causing Servetus to be burned, at Geneva, for an heretic, has (I understand) displeased some persons. When it was published, without a name, in some papers of The Old Whig, there was no such clamor raised against it. If I had published it, a second time, without my name, it would have been said, That I was ashamed to own it. When I published it with my name, then it gave the offence. This has led me to offer an apology for my publishing it; to assign the reasons

reasons, which induced me to it; and to answer the principal objections, which have been raised against it.

I have no malice, nor ill-will, to Calvin, nor to any of the human race. I wish no harm to his followers, but the greatest possible good; but I dislike persecution and uncharitableness, wherever I find them.

For that reason, I have added the brief account of Archbishop Laud's cruel treatment of Dr. Leighton: Not to exasperate any person, or party; but to deter all from a spirit of uncharitableness; and to cause us, if possible, to repete our animosities no more.

The essay concerning the belief of things, which are above reason, has lain by me, some time. And is now published, that Christians may understand one another; and that infidels may no longer misrepresent and insult us, upon this head.

To promote truth, peace, liberty, charity, and the most diffusive happiness to mankind, is the great end, for which I desire to live; and that glorious cause, for which (if I should be called to it) I look upon myself as obliged, even to dare to die.

Prescot-street, Goodman's-fields.

London, September 1, 1747.

N. B. *The Supplement is published by itself; for the sake of those, who have the former editions of the other pamphlets; and do not choose to buy this Collection of Tracts.*

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TRACT.

TRACT. I.

A DISSERTATION ON

2 THESS. II. 1, ---- 12.

In which it is shown that the

Bishop of *R O M E*

IS THE

M A N of *S I N*.

That the whole *Prophecy*, in that Chapter, is applicable to him and his Adherents, and to them alone.

Nor can we, at this Day, describe the *Apostasy* of the *Church* of *Rome*, in a more concise and lively manner, than the *APOSTLE* has done in that short and remarkable *Prophecy*.

TRACT I.

DISTRIBUTION

OF THE

BOOK OF ROMES

IS THE

MAN OF SIN

The word "sin" is used in the Bible to denote a transgression of the law of God, and is a term which is often used in the Scriptures to denote a state of sin.

The word "sin" is also used in the Bible to denote a state of sin, and is a term which is often used in the Scriptures to denote a state of sin.


The word "sin" is also used in the Bible to denote a state of sin, and is a term which is often used in the Scriptures to denote a state of sin.



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Concerning the

SECOND EDITION.

 *S* *this Dissertation* has been printed in Quarto, and is not to be had without buying the *Paraphrases and Notes, on six of St. PAUL's Epistles, in Imitation of Mr. Locke's Manner*; --- the *Author* has been prevailed upon, by the request of some of his friends,

A 2

to

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to print *this Edition* separate;
for the use of such as may
choofe to have this small piece
by itself.



A DIS-



A
DISSERTATION

Concerning the

MAN of SIN, &c.

2 THESS. II. 1,---12.

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by 1.
the coming of our Lord Jesus
Christ, and by our gathering
together unto him, that ye be not 2.
soon shaken in mind, or be trou-
bled, neither by spirit, nor by
word, nor by letter, as from us,
as that the day of Christ is at
hand.*

*Let no man deceive you by any 3.
means : for that day shall not*

A 3 come,

The Bishop of Rome,

- come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be reveled, the son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he, as a God, siteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is a God.
- 4.
 5. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these
 6. things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be re-
 7. veled in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now leteth, will let, until he be taken out of
 8. the way. And then shall that wicked one be reveled, (whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and will destroy with the brightnesse of his
 9. coming: Even him) whose coming is after the working of
 10. Satan, with all power, and signs, and

The Man of Sin.

7

and lying wonders; and with all deceivablenesse of unrighteousnesse, in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God 11. shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned, 12. who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousnesse.



OPERY, however artfully disguised in *Protestant Countries*, and where there is liberty for free inquiry, continues still to be a most corrupt and tyrannical *Religion*, in places where it is established and protected by the *Sword of the Magistrate*.

As the **APOSTLES** had the *prophetic spirit* in the highest degree, and *Popery* is such a notorious corruption of *Christianity*, a corruption, which has spread so far and wide, and continued so long in the world; one would naturally expect to find prædictions, in their *writings*, concerning *this grand Apostasy*, to prevent the true *Christians* of later ages from being shocked at the appearance of

so disagreeable a State of Things. Such a *Prophecy*, as I apprehend, is contained in this *Chapter*, v. 1,—12.

ST. PAUL planted the *Christian Church* at *Thessalonica*. After he had left that place, the *Christians* fell into a mistake, concerning the coming of the *day of the LORD*, imagining that ST. PAUL thought it to be just at hand. To rectify that mistake (which he suspected had been occasioned, either by his discourses, when he was among them, or by a *Letter*, which he had wrote since; — to rectify that mistake, I say) he sent this *second Epistle*, in which he acquaints them that *that Day* could not be so near; because a great and remarkable *Apostasy* was first to happen in the *Christian Church*^a.

That *the day of CHRIST*, v. 2. doth not refer to *our LORD's* coming to destroy *Jerusalem* and the *Jewish nation*, will planely appear, if we look into the rise and progresse of this mistake. In the *former Epistle*, Chap. iv. 13, &c. the APOSTLE dissuaded the *Thessalonians* from an excessive sorrow, upon the death of their friends; such as the *Heatbens* were commonly guilty of; putting them in mind of the *Christian* promise of a glorious resurrection to eternal life. When that resurrection and complete happinesse will commence, he there informs them, *viz.* at the coming

^a See Dr. *More's* *mystery of iniquity*, p. 441, &c.

coming of the LORD, when the *Christians*, who shall be then found alive upon the earth, shall be transformed; as well as the dead be raised, and the righteous all made happy. Having mentioned *that Coming of the LORD*, or of *the Day of the LORD*, he, in the beginning of the 5th Chapter, goes on with his discourse about *that day*; assuring them, that it would come suddenly and surprizingly; and that (as the particular time was unknown) Men should always be prepared; but he said nothing there, how nigh, or how distant, he apprehended it to be; and (very probably) from that his silence arose the mistake of the *Christians at Thessalonica*.

As soon as the APOSTLE understood that they had mistaken his meaning, he wrote to them this *second Letter*; the principal design of which was to set them right about this point. And he seems to have been very solicitous to set them right in this particular; lest they should have been tempted to have thrown off *Christianity itself*; when they should find that the event did not happen, according to their expectations.

When he was among them, he had told them that *a grand Apostasy* was to happen; and therefore *the Day of the LORD* was at some distance. That *Prophecy* he now repeats, and intimates to them that it was a plane proof of the distance of *that great day*. If therefore *the Day*, or *coming of the LORD*,
I Thess.

1 Theff. iv. 15, &c. and v. 1, &c. ought to be understood of *the Day of Judgment*, when CHRIST shall descend, the dead shall be raised, and the *generation* then living transformed; as it certainly ought to be: I think it evident, that it ought so to be understood in this Place also^b. For of *the same Day*, and the *same coming of the LORD*, he appears to be speaking in both the *Epistles*. And, what may further confirm this, is, that by *that day*, or *the coming of the LORD*^c, is generally meant his coming to judge the world. As, therefore, this is the usual meaning of the phrase, in ^c other Places of the *New Testament*, and the most evident meaning of it in these two *Epistles* to the *Thessalonians*; we have no occasion (upon that account) to look for *the Man of Sin*, and the *grand Apostasy*, before the destruction of *Jerusalem*; as they are obliged to do, who understand *this coming of the LORD* to refer to the destruction of that City.

None of the seven following interpretations of *this Prophecy* appear to me to be well grounded.

(1.) *Gro-*

^b *Aust. de Civit. Dei*, L. xx. c. 19.

^c See Matt. xxv. 31. Acts xvii. 31. 1 Cor. i. 8. and iii. 13. and v. 5. and xv. 23. 2 Cor. i. 14. Eph. iv. 30. compared with Rom. viii. 23. Philip. i. 6; 10. and ii. 16. 1 Theff. ii. 19. and iii. 13. and v. 23. 2 Theff. i. 10. 2 Tim. i. 12; 18. and iv. 8. 2 Pet. i. 19. and ii. 9. and iii. 4, — 10; 12. 1 John iv. 17. Jud. ver. 14. and many other Places, where Phrases of the same Import are made use of, as 1 Pet. i. 7; 13.

(1.) *Grotius* would persuade us that *Caius Caligula* was the *Man of Sin*, here prophesied of. Whereas, according to the account of all the latest and best *Chronologers*, this *Epistle* was written about twelve years after the death of that *Emperor*. It could not, therefore, surely be a prophecy of the wickedness and cruelty of *Caligula*^a.

(2.) *Dr. Hammond* would have *Simon Magus* and the *Gnostics* to be here designed.

But *S. Magus* had already showed himself an enemy to *Christianity* at *Samaria*; and therefore was not yet to be revealed. And, as to his conflict with *St. Peter* at *Rome*, and many of the *Doctor's* stories about the *Gnostics*, they seem to be built upon too sandy a foundation, to deserve any great regard. *Dr. Whitby* and *Mr. Le-Clerc* have abundantly confuted that interpretation.

Grotius's introducing *Simon Magus*, Ver. 8, 9. is as groundless. For the *Apostle* doth there evidently continue to speak of the same person, that he had begun with, Ver. 3, 4. And, if *Grotius* saw that the whole prophecy could not agree either to *Caligula*, or to *Simon Magus* and his deluded followers, I think he ought, in his interpretation, to have referred no Part of it to either of them.

(3.)

^a See this interpretation of *Grotius* more largely confuted, in *Dr. H. More's mystery of iniquity*, p. 445, &c.

(3.) * Others would have the *unbelieving Jews*, who persecuted the *Christians* before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and made many of them *apostatize* to *Judaism*, to be the *Man of Sin*, &c. But this interpretation appears to me to be not well-grounded. For, tho' the *unbelieving Jews*, did, indeed, persecute the *Christians*; yet they were not united under any one eminent head, or leader. They were never able to exalt themselves above all, that is called a *God*, or an *Emperor*, i. e. above all the kings and potentates upon earth. Nor had they, after this time, any one person among them, *who sate in the temple of God*, shewing and manifesting himself to be a *God*, or to be possessed of the power of a king, or temporal monarch.

Nor doth St. PAUL appear to me to be, by any means, *he that leted*, Ver. 6, 7. For the *unbelieving Jews* persecuted the *Christians* after his conversion, as well as before it; nor could he prevent the *Apostasy* of the *Jewish Christians*, by laboring (as he generally did) among the *Gentile Churches*.

Besides, in the *Prophecy* of St. PAUL, the *Apostasy* was (in a great Degree, at least,) to precede the *Revelation of the Man of sin*; whereas, the persecuting *anticristian* spirit of the *unbelieving Jews* was *reveled*, or manifested,

* See Mr. La-Roché's new *Memoirs* of Literature, for Sept. 1726.

tested, before the *Apostasy* of the *Jewish Christians*.

And, finally, it is a grand Objection with me against that interpretation, that by the *Man of Sin's* appearing, and being reveled, is understood his *perishing* and *destruction*. In as much as St. PAUL hath clearly distinguished his coming, and the continuance of his power, from the punishment and perdition, which would be, at last, inflicted on him by the LORD.

(4.) "Others, again, would have the *unbelieving Jews*, who revolted from the *Romans*, together with the *Jewish Converts*, who *apostatized* from the *Christians* to the *Jewish Religion*, to be the persons here *prophefied* of." Whereas, what the APOSTLE is here speaking of, was an *Apostasy* from the *true Religion*. For so the Word ^f *ἀποστασία* signifieth in other places of the *New Testament*: And what will lead us to understand it so, in this place, is, that it was to be carried on by "sham miracles, and all the deceit of unrighteousnesse; and should prevail only among vicious persons, who had an enmity to truth, and loved lies and wickednesse." But the *unbelieving Jews* could not *apostatize* from the *Christian Religion*; because they had never imbraced it; and the *Jewish Christians*, who did *apostatize*,
had

[Acts xxi. 21. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Heb. iii. 12.

had no eminent head or leader, that deserved the name of *the Man of Sin*, &c.

Dr. *Whitby*, who is the most considerable advocate for this interpretation, plays between the two; and brings in the *unbelieving Jews* revolting from the *Romans*, or the *Jewish Christians* falling away from *Christianity*; just as may best help him out in his *hypothesis*. But the *prophecy* itself is uniform, and describes one sort of *Apostasy*, quite throughout;

(5.) As *Mahomet* himself did never profess the *Christian Religion*, he could not be called an *Apostate*. However, as he made many *Christians* to *apostatize*, and built his *Religion* partly upon the ruine and corruption of *Christianity*, some think he might (in some sense) be said to sit in the *Temple of God*. He likewise (tho' he pretended to be an extraordinary Prophet) shewed himself to be in reality no *Prophet*, but a *temporal Prince*; and he arose after the downfall of the *Roman Empire*. Which I take to have been the (το κατέχον) that which hindered the appearance of the *Man of Sin*. All this may be said in favor of them who understand this as a *prophecy* of *Mahomet*. But then (1.) Suppose that St. JOHN and St. PAUL prophesied of the same thing (as I think they did) it is evident that *Rome* must be the Seat of the *grand Impostor*. For *Rev. xvii. 9; 18.* the *City, which stood upon seven hills, and then reigned over the Kings of the earth*, was to be

be the seat of this *tyrannical Power*. (2.) It is a sufficient argument against applying *this prophecy* to *Mahomet*, that this *wicked one* was to come after the working of *Satan*, with all power and signs and lying wonders, *i. e.* with great pretensions to *miracles*. Whereas *Mahomet* did not pretend to establish himself and his *Imposture* by *miracles*. For, tho' several *miracles* are ascribed to him, by the fabulous and legendary Writers among the *Mahometans*; yet their learned men renounce them all. Nor doth *Mahomet* himself, in the *Koran*, lay any Claim to them^s.

(6.) Tho' *Rome* heathen opposed *Christianity* very much, and the *Emperors* exalted themselves above all the *Kings* and *Princes* upon the earth; yet this their exaltation was not a thing then to be revealed. Neither did they *apostatize* from *Christianity*, nor sit in the *Temple of God*, nor pretend to establish their power by *miracles*.

(7.) The *Papists*, in their *Annotations* on the *Rhemish New Testament*, interpret this *Apostasy* to be "the falling away of the *Protestants* from the *Church of Rome*." And so (by a strange *Legerdemain*) we are to be the *Man of Sin*, or his Forerunners at least. Whereas it doth not certainly appear that there was any *Christian Church* at *Rome*, when *St. PAUL* wrote *this second Epistle* to the

Thessa-

^s See Dr. *Prideaux's* Life of *Mahomet*, p. 31. and Mr. *Salé's* Translation of *Al Koran*, p. 203; 236; 473.

Theſſalonians. Nor are we united under any one common Head upon earth; nor do we pretend to eſtabliſh our doctrine by *miracles*. Theſe and many other things plainly ſhow, that it is ridiculous to apply *this propheſy* to the Reformation from *Popery*.

As we have rejected theſe *Miſinterpretations*, the next thing is to point out the APO-
STLE'S meaning. And, however difficult it may appear, upon a tranſient reading, to fix the ſenſe of ſo ſhort and general a *Propheſy* as this; I will venture to ſay, that *no Propheſy* could have been more exactly accompliſhed, than this hath been, in the *Biſhop of Rome*, and his adherents. And therefore, as it agrees to them, and the whole of it to them only; there is the greateſt reaſon to think, that it was deſigned for them; eſpecially as it is a ſingular event, the like to which never happened before, and (moſt probably) never will happen again.

But let us go over the ſeveral Parts of *the Propheſy*.

Ver. 3. “ Before the coming of the day
“ of the Lord, there was to happen a *Falling*
“ *away*, or an *Apoſtaſy*.” And, accordingly,
what an *Apoſtaſy* from the true *Chriſtian* wor-
ſhip, doctrine, and practice, hath happened;
and is ſupported by the Church of *Rome*?
Inſtead of worſhipping God with ſimplicity,
and in ſpirit and truth, they have introduced
external

external pomp and numerous ceremonies, which strike upon the senses and ingage the attention, without mending the heart.

Instead of worshiping GOD through JESUS CHRIST (the only mediator between GOD and men) they have substituted the doctrine of *Dæmons*, i. e. of the spirits of men departed out of this life, who (as they pretend) intercede^h with God for us; and they invoke the *Virgin Mary* more frequently than GOD himself. They have not only succeeded *Rome* heathen, in the seat of *Empire*; but have also apostatized into their imagery and idolatryⁱ. Though they have, indeed, disguised it with new names and different pretensions.

Instead of the *Christian Doctrine*, they have apostatized from the faith, and in many countries taken from the common People the liberty of reading the *Scriptures* in their mother tongue; that they might, with the more ease, propagate their own delusions.

B

For,

^h See the *Popish Gatechism*, printed, 1734. Chap. 8. *Concil. Trident. Sess. xxv.*

ⁱ See the Account given by Dr. *Middleton*, who was himself at *Rome*, and had thereby an opportunity to observe the similitude between the *Religion* of antient and present *Rome*. — With which compare *Roma antiqua & Recens*, or the Conformity of antient and modern ceremonies; shewing, from indisputable testimonies, that the ceremonies of the *Church of Rome* are borrowed from the *Pagans*. Writen in *French*, before 1666. Translated into *English*, by *James du Prè*. London, 1732.—See also Sir *Isaac Newton's* Book on the *Præces*, &c. p. 204.

For, having in a forcible and violent manner, restrained the liberty of private judgment, they have with lesse difficulty substituted, instead of the most excellent *doctrine* of the *Gospel*, their own Articles of faith, and the forged traditions and lying legends of their *Church*. And, not content barely to propagate ignorance, they have dared most impudently to commend it, and called it *the Mother of devotion*.

Their encouraging the *Apostasy* in *practice*, will be taken notice of, under the sentences that immediately follow.

THIS GRAND APOSTASY was to procede gradually to its height. But, when it came to such a pitch; then was to be reveled one, who should deservedly be called, *the Man of sin, and Son of perdition*.

That this phrase may denote a succession of persons, one after another, tho' but one at a time, ^k may appear from *Deut. xvii. 14---20*. where that phrase, the *King of Israel*, must be understood, not of one King only, but of a succession of Kings; and from several texts¹, where the *Jewish High-priest* is spoken of, as one person, tho' any one in that succession of *High-priests* is thereby intended.

And to whom can the title of *the Man of Sin* so properly belong, as to the succession of the *Bishops of Rome*, for many past centuries?

^k See Dr. *H. More*, &c. p. 219, &c. ¹ Lev. xxi. 10. Numb. xxxv. 25; 28. Josh. xx. 6. Heb. ix. 7.

ries? There have been among them, not only some of the vilest of mankind, notorious for their cruelty, infidelity, debauchery, simony, covetousness, intolerable pride and ambition; and all manner of wickedness. But, by their Indulgences, pardons, and dispensations^m, which they claim a power from CHRIST of granting; and which they have sold in so infamousⁿ a manner, they have encouraged all manner of vile and wicked practices. Instead of shewing men the necessity of sincere repentance, unfeigned faith, and an holy life and conversation; they have contrived numberless methods to render an holy life intirely need- less; — to indulge men in the greatest and most abominable vices, and yet assure them

B 2

of

^m See the late Popish Catechism, c. x.

ⁿ I have now by me Laurence Banck's *Taxa S. Cancellariae Romanae*, i. e. *The Tax of the sacred Roman Chancery*. And Mr. Bayle (in his *Dictionary*, under the Article *Banck, Laurence*) hath given us the History of this remarkable Book: In which there is a very particular account how much money was to be paid into the *Apostolic*, or *Pope's* Chamber, for almost all Sorts of Vices. Ex. gr. " he who had been guilty of incest with " his Mother, Sister, or other Relation, either in Con- " sanguinity, or Affinity, is taxed at V. Gros. The " Absolution of him who has deflowered a Virgin, VI " Gros. * The Absolution of him who has murdered " his Father, Mother, Sister, Wife, — V. or VII. " Gros.

" The Absolution and pardon of all acts of Fornica- " tion committed by any of the Clergy, in what manner " soever, whether it be with a Nun, within or without " the limits of the Nunnery; or with his relations in " consanguini-

of heaven; even without a thorough repentance, provided they will sufficiently pay them for their admission.

The Form of *Indulgences*, a little before the Reformation, was so ample, that rich men

“ consanguinity, or affinity, or with his God-daughter,
 “ or with any other woman whatsoever; and whether
 “ also the said absolution be given in the name only of
 “ the *Clergyman* himself, or of him jointly with his
 “ whores, with a dispensation to enable him to take and
 “ hold his Orders and ecclesiastical Benefices, and with
 “ a clause also of Inhibition, costs 36 *Tournois*, and 9,
 “ or 3 *Ducats*.

“ And if, besides the above, he receives absolution
 “ from Sodomy, or Bestiality, with the dispensation
 “ and clause of Inhibition, as before, he must pay 90
 “ *Tournois*, 12 *Ducats*, and 6 *Carlins*.

“ But, if he only receives absolution from Sodomy,
 “ or Bestiality, with the Dispensation, or Clause of In-
 “ hibition, he pays only 36 *Tournois*, and 9 *Ducats*.
 “ A *Nun*, having committed fornication several Times,
 “ within and without the bounds of the Nunnery, shall
 “ be absolved, and enabled to hold all the dignities of
 “ her Order, even that of *Abesse*, by paying 36 *Tour-*
 “ *nois*, and 9 *Ducats*.

“ The absolution of him who keeps a Concubine,
 “ with dispensation to take and hold his Orders and
 “ Ecclesiastical Benefices, costs 21 *Tournois*, 5 *Ducats*,
 “ and 6 *Carlins*.”

This is a translation of the very words of the *Book* itself. Only the first articles to the * are wanting in *one Edition*. However, even these articles, also, are in the most perfect and correct Editions.

This *Book* has been several times printed both in *Po-
 pish* and *Protestant* countries; and the *Protestant* princes
 inserted it among the causes of their rejecting the Council
 of *Trent*. When the *Papists* saw what use the *Pro-*
testants made of it, they put it into the list of prohibited
 Books.

men were unconcerned, what sins they committed, as knowing that they could, living or dead, purchase a pardon. For, suppose they neglected it in their life-time, it was but leaving so much money by will, at their death, for masses and indulgences, and they

B 3

were

Books. But then they condemned it only upon the supposition of its having been corrupted by (the *Protestants*, or) *Heretics*.

But let them suppose, as much as they please, that it has been corrupted by *Heretics*; the Editions of it, which have been published in *Popish Countries*, and which the *Papists* cannot disown, as that of *Rome*, 1514. That of *Cologne*, 1515. Those of *Paris*, 1520, 1545, and 1625. And those of *Venice*, one in the VIth Vol. of the *Oceanus Juris*, published 1533. the other in the XVth Vol. of the same Collection, reprinted 1584. — *These Editions*, I say, are more than sufficient to justify the reproaches of the *Protestants*, and to cover the *Church of Rome* with confusion.

The *Popish Controvertists*, who have not a word to say against the authority of the Edition of *Rome*, or that of *Paris*, &c. are under great perplexity. However, since the *Protestants* have made so great an handle of this *Book*, the *Papists* pretend, that (tho' some of the *Popes* have been guilty of such infamous practices, and suffered such books to appear; — yet) the *Church of Rome* in general abhors them. [*A fine proof of the infallibility of their Popes!*]

But the *Church of Rome* has never shewn, by the suppression of these *Taxes*, that she has had them in abhorrence. They have been printed (as has been already observed) thrice at *Paris*, twice at *Cologne*, and twice at *Venice*. And some of these *Editions* have been published, since *Claude d'Espence*, a *Popish Dr.* exclaimed publicly against the enormities of this book.

The

were assured that all would be forgiven them. Can such notorious wickedness always escape without an eminent perdition?

How justly may *present Rome*, for her persecution, idolatry, and notorious wickedness, be deemed *mystical Babylon* °, and be (spiritually, or figuratively) called *Sodom and Egypt* ° (where wickedness hath risen to an amazing height, and the *people of God* have been under a long and cruel bondage) and the *Mother of fornications and of the abominations of the earth* °.

V. 4. If rightly translated, would (I think) have run thus, “ Who opposes himself, *i. e.* “ to CHRIST, and exalts himself above every “ one that is called a God, or (*even*) the Imperial Dignity, so that he, as a God, sits “ [enthroned] in the Temple of God, shewing “ himself to be a God.” [*Who opposes himself*] that is, to CHRIST, and true *Christians*.

And

The *Inquisition of Spain*, and that of *Rome* have condemned *the book*, only as they suppose it to have been corrupted by *Heretics*.

I must add, that the suppression of such a work is not a sure sign of disapproving the rules it contains. This may only signify that they repented of the publication of it, as it gave so fair an handle for the *Heretics* to reproach the *Court of Rome*, and to wound the *Church of Rome*, thro’ the Sides of the *Pope*.

These ought to be esteemed *Mysteries of State, Arcana Imperii*, not fit to be divulged.

° Rev. xi. 8. and xvii. 5. P Καθίσαι, so the Word signifies, Rev. xvii. 15. and xviii. 7. answering to שׁב Psalm ix. 4. and xxix. 10. and cx. 1. Ezek. xxviii. 2. Zech. vi. 13.

And who hath done this more than the *Church of Rome*? Witnesse their infamous *Croisadoes*, and the cruel massacres of the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, of whom they are said to have slain above 900,000^a.

In about 30 Years from the first founding of the order of *Jesuits*, above 800,000 of the *Protestants* were put to death, by the hand of the executioner only^r. Besides great numbers, who perished several other ways, of whom we have now no particular account remaining. The *Duke of Alva* boasted of his having, in a few years, cut off 36,000 *protestants* in the *Netherlands*^r.

The horrible and infernal court of *Inquisition*^t is said, in about 30 Years, to have^t consumed 150,000, by various kinds of torments, and still remains in *Spain*, *Portugal*, *Italy*, an hell upon earth, the terror of human nature, on purpose to hinder all free inquiry, and to keep mankind in the greatest ignorance of the *true Religion*, and in a most
B 4 slavish

^a See *Mede's Works*, p. 503.

^r Ibid. p. 504.

^t Whoever would see a faithful and authentic account of the rise, progress, and laws of the *Inquisition*; and of the inhumane treatment, that such as differ from the *Church of Rome* there meet with, — let them read *Limborch's History of the Inquisition*, translated by Mr. *Chandler*. — As also *Isaac Martyn's* account of his own sufferings in the *inquisition*. And the account lately published by Mr. *Couftos*, of the dreadful tortures he underwent, in that black and infernal person. See also Dr. *Geddes's* brief account of the *inquisition*, in his tracts.

^t See *Mede's Works*, p. 504.

flavish subjection to an *Hierarchy* of ambitious, lazy, and debauched *Priests*.

The cruel imprisonment, scourging, and burning of the *Martyrs* here in *England*^u, and the horrid and prodigious *massacres* in *France* and *Ireland*, can never surely be forgot. No benevolent Person can read the accounts, at this distance of time, without weeping eyes and a bleeding heart.

Persecution is a distinguishing characteristic of *this Apostate*^w. If to wear^x out the *saints of the most high*, and to slay such as are *witnesses*^y for truth, virtue, and liberty, and that bear their testimony against impositions, violence and persecution; if to^z make war with the *saints*, and frequently to prevail against, and overcome them; and even to be^a drunk with the blood of the *saints*, and of the *martyrs* of *JESUS*.—If these things, I say, can possibly be accomplished, they have been, and still are, accomplished by the cruel and tyrannical *Church of Rome*.

By every one that is called A GOD, must be understood *earthly magistrates*, or *temporal princes*; for Θεός, without the Article, doth often signify a God; and here it is evidently opposed to ὁ Θεός, THE GOD, or the one true God, in whose temple *this Man of Sin* was to fit.

^u See Fox's *Acts and Monuments*.
Mystery of iniquity, p. 167, &c.

^w See More's

^x Dan. vii. 25.

^y Rev. xi. 7, 8.

^z Ibid. xiii. 4—7.

^a Ibid.

xvii. 6.

fit. So Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7. "I have said,
"Ye are gods, and all of you are children of
"the most high: but ye shall die like men,
"and fall like one of the princes." And
Verse 1. of that Psalm, "God standeth in
"the congregation of the mighty, he judges
"among the gods"^b.

But as Σεβαστοι seems to be an allusion to
Σεβαστοις, the Greek Name of the *Cæsars*, or
Roman Emperors; it is possible that the APO-
STLE might, in both the phrases, refer to the
Roman Emperors; who, after their deaths,
were (most of them) inrolled among the *Gods*.
Nay, Caius, before his death, laid claim to
Divinity, and would needs be acknow-
leged and worshiped as a *God*.

That, by the *Temple of God*, where this
Impostor was to fix his seat, may be under-
stood the *Christian Church*^c, will appear, if it
be considered that the *Christian Church*, is, in
the *New Testament*, often called the *Temple of*
God,^d or compared to the *Temple*. In this
Temple it is prophesied, that the *Man of Sin*
would exalt himself above all *temporal Magi-*
strates, Kings and Emperors. And it is very
easy to point out the accomplishment of this
part of the *prophecy*. For how proudly hath
the

^b See also Ezek. xxviii. 2; 6; 9. John x. 34, 35.
^c 1 Cor. viii. 5. ^e *Austin, de civ. dei*, L. XX. c. 19.
^d 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 20, 21,
22. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Heb. iii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 6, 7.
Rev. iii. 12.

the *Bishop of Rome* thus exalted himself, and been stiled, by his flatterers and vile dependants, "*A God*", who ought not to be called "to an account; the supreme Deity on earth, King of kings, and Lord of lords, by whom princes reign, and upon whom the right of kings depends?" Nay, the *Glossator* upon the *Canon Law* hath given him the high and blasphemous Title, of our Lord God the *Pope*. And the *Popes* have acted accordingly, absolving Subjects from their Allegiance to their lawful Princes, *fomenting and raising Rebel- lions*[†], deposing or murdering rightful princes, and setting up others in their stead. With what pride and haughtinesse have they called *Emperors*, their *vassals*? and even obliged some of them to hold the bridle, till *his holiness, the Pope*, has mounted his horse? Or to bear up his train after him, when *his holiness* has been pleased to walk in a pompous procession? Nay, with what amazing insolence have the *Romish priests* whipt kings and sovereign princes? and the *Pope* has even set his foot upon an *Emperor's* neck.

He has claimed the sole right of nominating, investing, or confirming the princes and rulers of the earth.

If this be not to *exalt himself above all that is called a God*[‡], or an *Emperor*; there can be

* Vid. *Canon. Distinct.* 96. c. *satis evidenter.* † Of which we had a most notorious instance, so lately as the years 1745, and 1746. ‡ In this Expression, there seems to be an evident allusion to Dan. xi. 36.

be no event, to answer this, or any *prophecy* whatsoever.

I think *Σέλασα* was designed to refer to the *Roman Emperor*. But, if we understand it (as some do) of objects of, or things pertaining to, *religious worship*: — The *prophecy* is still accomplished. For doth not the *Bishop of Rome* claim the sole power of ordaining sacraments, consecrating altars and images, canonizing Saints, and appointing what sort of *religious worship* shall be paid; as well as to whom? Otherwise, how comes it to pass, that the *Virgin Mary* is more frequently invoked than the *GOD and Father of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST*? Is not this, most evidently, a *religious tyranny*, founded in, and still supported by, the pretence of *Religion*? Other *Potentates* have sometimes called in *religion* for a pretence, and laid aside that pretence, when their purpose has been served; but no *tyranny*, besides this, hath been intirely founded in, and all along carried on, merely by, a pretence to *religion*. And how exactly has THE APOSTLE prophesied of this? when he foretold, that he would *sit in the Temple of GOD* (not a *God*, or temporal potentate; but) *as a God*, i. e. under another, a religious pretence^h, he would lay claim to the power of a *temporal Monarch*,
(in

^h Lactant. l. vii. § 17. *Rex ille teterrimus, sed Mendaciorum propheta, & seipsum constituet, & vocabit Deum, &c.*

(*in ordine ad spiritualia*) under the pretence of being *the Head of the Catholic Church*, and having *all spiritual power*, he would thus exalt himself. And, I need not say, that under this color, the *Bishop of Rome* has claimed a most exorbitant power, and that herein *this his Kingdom is diverse from all Kingdoms*. For other princes rule in their own dominions, by their temporal power. But, under the notion of spiritual power, the *Pope* claims obedience in Kingdoms and countries, where a foreign, temporal prince could have no claim. So that, tho' he does not directly pretend to be *a God*, or *a temporal Prince*; yet he shows himself to be one; and hath often been, in reality, possessed of equal, or greater power.

From our saying, that "by the *Temple of God*, in this *prophecy*, is meant the *Christian Church*," Bellarmine would infer, "that then the *Church of Rome*, must be the *Church of God*; For there the *Pope* sitteth upon his throne." But his argument is vain and frivolous. And no more will hence follow, than that the *Church of Rome* may be called *the Church of God*, in the same Sense that an *adulterous Woman*ⁱ may be called a *Wife*; or, as the greatest corruptions may retain the names, which were given in the times of the greatest simplicity and purity.

V. 6. "And ye know what now hinders,
" that he may be reveled in his own proper
" season."

ⁱ Rev. xvii. 1, &c.

"season." From St. PAUL's cautious and ^k covert manner of speaking, lest he should offend the higher powers, as well as from other arguments, it is highly probable that the *Roman Emperors* were the obstructing power. And it is remarkable, that, upon that very account, the *primitive Christians* used to pray for the continuance of the *Roman Empire*, viz. "to hinder the appearance of *Anti-christ*"¹.

^m *Tertullian* (who flourished toward the conclusion of the second Century) saith, "Now the mystery of iniquity worketh, only he who leteth, will let, 'till he be taken out of the way. Who is this (saith he) but the *Roman Empire*?"ⁿ

And *Jerome*^o, when he heard that *Rome* was taken by *Alaricus* the *Goth*, shewed plainly, that he expected the appearance of *Anti-christ*, upon the removal of the *Roman Empire*, and wondered that it was not more speedy. "For (saith he) *He that hindered*, is taken out of the way, and yet we
"do

^k Vid. *Aust. de Civitate Dei*, l. xx. c. 19. ¹ Dr. *Geddes's Essay on the Roman Empire*, &c. Vol. III. p. 26. of his *tracts*. ^m *De Resur. Carnis*. c. 24.

ⁿ See also *Lactant.* l. vii. §. 16, 17. and *Jerome* on *Daniel*, who saith, "it was a general opinion, that, towards the end of the World, 10 Kings should share the *Roman Empire*; and that *Anti-Christ* should be the 11th, and overcome them all." ^o *Ad Gent. de Monogam.*

“ do not understand that *Anti-christ* approaches.”

V. 7. “ For the mystery of iniquity already worketh; only there is one that obstructs, until he be taken out of the Way.”

It is impossible for us to know more of the tendency towards *this grand Apostasy*, in the APOSTLES days, than the APOSTLES, or primitive Christians, have mentioned in *their writings*. *Hymenæus* and *Alexander* subverted the Christians, by teaching false doctrines. *Diotrephes* aspired after the præeminence. *Demas* over-loved this present world. Others are charged with making a gain of godliness. Some by a false humility fell into the worship of *angels*. Others placed *Religion* in a distinction between meats and drinks, forbidding to marry, and injoining abstinence from such things as GOD allows. Many others placed their *Religion* in festivals, and New-moons, in a distinction between days and weeks, months and years: Not considering that “ *the Kingdom of GOD* consisted in “ righteousness and peace, and joy in the “ *holy spirit*.” And finally, others denied, that *Jesus* had a real body, and really suffered and died; or that *Jesus*, who came in the flesh, was the Christ. From such corruptions of Christianity it was, that St. JOHN said “ There “ were, then, many *Anti-christs*.”

As we know what the *Apostasy* is, at its height, we may justly conclude, that every
corrup-

corruption in worship, faith, or practice, was a making way for *this Apostasy*; somewhat of the spirit of the *Man of Sin*, or the *Mystery of Iniquity then working*. And (according to this part of the *Prophecy*) it is well known, that they have not arrived to their *grand corruption of Christianity*, but step by step; and at the first by slow and almost insensible degrees.

V. 8. "And then shall be reveled that wicked one, or lawlesse person."

And it is notoriously evident, that the removal of the *Roman Emperors* did actually open the way for the advancement of the *Bishop of Rome* to his power and grandeur^p. Then was *that wicked one* signally reveled.—ὁ ἀνομίος, *that lawlesse person*. How proper a title for him, who hath been declared to be subject to no law, but that he can, by the plenitude of his power, make right wrong, and wrong right; virtue vice, and vice virtue; that he can dispense with all laws, human and divine? And that he may do all things above law, against law, and without law?

V. 8. ("Whom the LORD will consume by the breath of his mouth, and will utterly abolish by the brightnesse of his coming:") These words must be considered as thrown in, by way of *parenthesis*. Or else his destruction, mentioned in this verse, will be placed

^p See Dr. Geddes's *Traëts*, Vol. II. p. 10.

placed before his coming, and exalting himself to such power, by the most wicked and deceitful methods, mentioned in the next verse. And I suppose that it was thrown in, to comfort the *Christians*, under such a dark prospect, by the assured hopes of *this Tyranny's* coming to an end.

As the last sentence was inserted by way of *parenthesis*, we may go on with the principal subject, as if it had not been there.

V. 9, 10, 11, 12. When the obstructing power is removed, — “Then shall that wicked one be reveled, whose coming is after the working of *Satan*, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders;” and with the most fraudulent and unrighteous cheats; tho’ none need to be deluded thereby, if they are lovers of truth and virtue.

The many Pretences to *Miracles* in the *Church of Rome* ^a have abundantly fulfilled this. They have asserted that *Churches* have been taken up in one place, and carried thro’ the air, into distant countries. That Images have noded, smiled, frowned, or spoken, upon occasion. That the Blood of a Saint hath been annually liquefied, on a certain day of the year. That the first convert, *St. Gaul* made in *Switzerland*, was a *Bear* ^r. That *St. Antony of Padua* preached to a vast assembly of

^a See Dr. *More's* mystery of iniquity, p. 133, &c.
^r *Addison's Travels*, p. 284. *ibid.* p. 47, &c.

of Fishes, which he had miraculously called together, and who devoutly heard him *preach the Word of the LORD*. That St. Francis preached with great successe to *Birds* and *Beasts*, which he thought OUR LORD had commanded, *Mark xvi. 15.* when he bade the APOSTLES to "Go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to *every creature*."

Numberlesse have been the fictitious apparitions of the souls of dead men, in order to prove such a state as *Purgatory*. Nay, to prove this, what have they not pretended to? voices from heaven or hell; cures at the shrines of their Saints, or by their bones and reliques; to which they have sometimes ascribed the power of raising persons from the dead! All the *Legends* and lying wonders, which the most diabolical invention could contrive, have been made use of, to found and support this *notorious Apostasy*.

For my own part, I question the reality of *all their miracles*¹. But, suppose any of them to be real, a *miracle* only sheweth that some *Being* interposes, who is superior in power to man. And, as we must judge by the doctrine and practice they would promote, whether *miracles* are worked by a good or a bad *spirit*; it is evident that (if they work any

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real

¹ *Austin. de Civit. Dei, l. xx. c. 19.* And Dr. Geddes's *tracts*, Vol. III. p. 25, &c. However, that they lay claim to *miracles*, see the *Popish Catechism*, Appendix, §. 13.

real miracles) they are assisted by a *malevolent and wicked spirit*; because they would thereby promote ignorance and falshood, idolatry and wickednesse.

They have, likewise, by the most unrighteous deceit, appeared as professed friends to *Christianity*, tho' really its greatest Enemies^t.

They have canonized men for *Saints*, who have been the most flagitious *siners*. And have consecrated murders, treasons, massacres, and rebellions; by promising their votaries, that they should not passe thro' the fire of *Purgatory*, but should have immediate entrance into Heaven; suppose they should be cut off in perpetrating such black and horrid crimes.

It were endlesse to mention their pious frauds, and specious, astonishing methods to increase their numbers; to draw in the worst of men, and to discourage the best; in order to gratifie their own exorbitant lust of riches, power and ambition.

And must not men have cast off *the love of truth*, who can delight in their *fabulous traditions*, and monstrous, lying *Legends*? and tamely

^t Lactant. l. vii. §. 19. Hic est autem, qui appellatur *Antichristus*: sed se ipse *Christum* mentietur; & contra verum dimicabit, &c. How remarkably applicable is this to the *Bishop of Rome*, who lays Claim to the Title "of the Successor of St. PETER, and CHRIST's Vicar upon Earth"; and consequently, *the head of the Church*, "the Father and Pastor of all the Faithful?" See the *Popish Catechism*, c. ult.

tamely give up *the Scriptures*, or speak of them with contempt?

Thus have I briefly gone through the several parts of *this Prophecy*, and shown (I think) that *no Prophecy* can be more exactly accomplished.

COROLLARIES.

(1.) "From what hath been said, it is easy "to judge concerning *Poper*y and the *Reformation*." It is not the largeness of a *Church*, nor her external pomp and splendor, which makes her the *true Church*. Nor are they always the *Schismatics*, who are the fewest in number. No; — suppose all the *nations* of the earth should generally agree together, in maintaining absurd doctrines, immoral and unreasonable practices, uncharitableness and impositions; — They are properly the *Heretics* and *Schismatics*; and let the number, who separate from them, in defence of truth, virtue, liberty, and charity, be never so few, they are in reality the *true Church*. And the other is only a *grand Schism*, or *worldly Faction*: — Even tho' their party be as numerous, as that, with the soles of their feet, they could dry up rivers.

Holding the truth in love is a mark of the *true Church*. And such, as forsake this, are *Apostates*. Such is the *Schism*, *Faction*, and

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Apostasy

" See the *Appendix* to the *Papish Catechism*. §. 2.

Apostasy of the present Church of Rome; that Mother of Idolatries, and of the Abominations of the earth. And Reformation is a most glorious thing, when founded upon its right Basis of reason and scripture, liberty and charity.

(2.) “How strong an argument may, what hath been said, afford us, for the truth of the *Christian Religion*?”

Here was a most signal event foretold, and that many ages before it came to passe; — An Event, the like to which had never happened since the creation of the World, (and, most probably, there never will happen such another;) it was, therefore, an event, which was out of the reach of all human conjecture, or foresight. And yet experience hath shown that the *prædiction* was exact.

Neither *Enthusiasts* nor *Impostors* could, possibly, have guessed so agreeably to so uncommon an event. Nor can we, who have lived to see and know so much of the accomplishment, describe *this Apostasy* in a more just, or lively manner, than St. PAUL has here done, in a few verses, and St. JOHN, more largely, in the *Revelation*.

They, therefore, must have been *true Prophets* and *divinely inspired*: Or else they never could have uttered such remarkable *Prædictions*; — which time and fact have so amazingly verified.

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Some other arguments for the truth of the *Christian Religion*, tho' just and conclusive, may be of a more subtile and difficult nature. But the rise and progreſſe of *this Apoſtaſy* is a fact, a plane, notorious, well-known fact:---an argument, which cannot eaſily be evaded; but muſt ſtrike the virtuous and attentive!

All *Church Hiſtory*, for ſeveral paſt *Centuries*, is full of it; and we need only open our eyes, and we may behold too much of it. For *the Man of Sin* is even now upon *his Throne*, exalting himſelf, as much as he can, above all the kings of the earth; and with ſuch ſtrong deluſions ſeducing the *nations*, as to make many of them *believe a lye*.

They may pretend, among us, "that *Popery* is altered, and become a *meek and harmleſſe Religion*; and, that they have thrown off "that *perſecuting Spirit*, which they have formerly diſcovered." But does not *the bel- liſh court of inquiſition* ſtill ſubſiſt in *Spain, Portugal, Italy*, and other *Popiſh* countries? And our poor, diſtreſſed *proteſtant* brethren, in the ſouthern parts of *France*; who have, not many years ago, ſuffered a moſt dreadful perſecution, merely becauſe of *their reli- gion*, are too freſh a proof and inſtance of the *perſecuting ſpirit of Popery*, to ſuffer it to be believed among us, that the *Church of Rome*, tho' dreſſed up in ſheep's clotheing, is any other than a *ravenous wolf*.

OUR ANCESTORS felt the dreadful effects of their *persecuting* spirit, and experienced their tender mercies to be very cruel. Nay, we ourselves were in imminent Danger. But, by a remarkable Interposition of the divine providence, the snare was broken, and we have escaped. Yet all pious and benevolent persons are daily mourning over this *anti-christian Corruption and Tyranny*; and ready to say, "How long, O Lord, holy, just, and "and true; wilt not thou deliver thine Elect, that cry unto thee day and night!"

CHRISTIANITY is a *Religion* reasonable in itself, promotes the purest Virtue, was at first planted by *miracles* and great plenty of *spiritual gifts*. And here is a remarkable *Prophecy*, which (after so many hundred years) is exactly verified, by a notorious event. — What evidences would be sufficient, where all these are rejected?

(3.) "We ought not to be shocked at the "present state of the *Christian Church*. Because such, did the APOSTLES of OUR "LORD *prophecy*, that it would be."

Tho' the best of things are liable to corruption; yet one would hardly have thought it possible, that so great, so notorious a *corruption*, could (by any pretence) have sprung out of the *Christian Religion*. Look into the *New Testament*, which contains the *religion* of JESUS, and look into the polity and constitution of the *Church of Rome*; and you may easily

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filly perceive that light and darknesse are not more unlike. The *Gospel* every where requires the greatest virtue and purity, and this wicked Church (which schismatically calls herself the *Catholic and only true Church*^w) has invented so many arts, to make men very *religious*, without any virtue or goodnesse at all; that (wherever it is established and prevails) it encourages almost all manner of wickednesse and abominations.

DANIEL *prophefied* * that the GOD of *Heaven* would erect a *Kingdom*, which should be subject to *the Son of Man*; and we say, “that *this Kingdom of righteousness* was “actually erected by OUR LORD JESUS “CHRIST.” Now, upon looking abroad into a great part of *Christendom*, it is natural to inquire, “Is this the *Kingdom* prophefied “of?”

No; --- to prevent the anxiety, which might arise in the minds of *true Christians* from such a difficulty, — it was also *prophefied*, that, out of *this spiritual Kingdom*, there should arise one of the greatest *apostasies* and *corruptions* that ever appeared in the world. Though *true Christianity* (as contained in the *Scriptures*) hath all along been invariably the same.

(4.) “How ought we to rejoice that *this* “*tyrannical and unrighteous power* shall come

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“to

† See the *Appendix* to the *Papish Catechism*. §. 3.
* Dan. ii. 44. and vii. 13, 14.

“ to an end? and think ourselves obliged
 “ (from a sense of our duty to God, and out
 “ of *benevolence* to mankind) to do every
 “ thing, in our power, towards bringing
 “ about so happy an event;”

BLESSED BE GOD that we are delivered from this worse than *Egyptian darknesse and slavery*. Particularly, let us reflect, with gratitude, upon our narrow escape under the auspicious conduct of *the glorious Prince of Orange, K. William of immortal memory*, who (by the favor of a kind providence) laid the foundation for a later escape, when, by means of a persecuting and bigoted faction, a *Popish Pretender* was ready to ascend the throne. Then it was that *King William's* noble legacy took place, by the coming in of *the illustrious House of Hanover*. A Family, who were amongst the *first Protesters against Popery*, and who have ever since continued *Protestants*. And (which hath been, in a distinguishing manner, the glory of that illustrious House; and attended with the greatest and most diffusive Blessings; — they have, upon many occasions, been) strenuous Asserters of liberty, both civil and religious.

The happy effects of this, they themselves saw and experienced, during the rebellion, 1745, when persons of all ranks and orders, and of almost all sects and parties, so zealously united against a *Popish*, abjured Pretender, and his *Highland banditti*; and in supporting our

our *Protestant* royal family in the possession of the *British* crown.—BLESSED BE GOD for such a *royal Family*, and let all the People say AMEN! May they and their descendants continue friends to mankind, throughout all coming generations! and experience the Joys and ample Blessings, which attend the sincere love of truth, virtue, religion, and liberty!

It is said that this corrupt and persecuting *Religion* still gains ground in this free and Protestant nation; and even in a day of light and liberty. — But what madnesse must possesse such as would bring us back again into this *spiritual Egypt*? When all wise Men would avoid her crimes, for fear of, at last, partaking in her plagues?

It is the Duty of all *Protestants*, to give up whatever *absurd doctrines*, or *imposing principles*, they may have hitherto mixed with what is truly *reasonable* and *Christian*. 'Till then, it must be expected that *Popery* will always get footing among us.

THANKS BE TO GOD, that we have the *Scriptures* so common, and in our own language; that we are allowed the *Liberty of private Judgment*; and blessed with so many, and such excellent helps to understand our *Bible*! That such a *Spirit of Liberty and free inquiry* hath, in this last age, gone out into the *Land*! May Heaven diffuse this *happy Spirit*, and grant it the longest continuance!

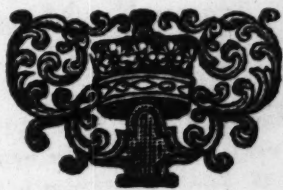
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It is not 300 Years, since our *Ancestors* were required to believe the grossest *Aburdities*, and to practise the most flagrant *Idolatry*, and that upon pain of forfeiting all that was dear to them in this world, and of being sentenced to *eternal damnation* in the world to come.

Tho' the first Reformers made a glorious stand, and went great lengths in a little time; yet they could not shake off one of the worst parts of *Popery*, viz. *the Spirit of Infallibility and Persecution*. And a race of *tyrannical Kings*, supported by *covetous and ambitious Priests*, continued to practise upon *Protestants*, that cruelty, which all *Protestants* had so much and so justly exclaimed against, when practised by the *Papists* upon themselves. By these Means it has come to passe, that *true Liberty*, and *free Inquiry* are but of Yesterday. — A Blessing reserved by providence for us!

The most acceptable way of testifying our gratitude to *ALMIGHTY GOD*, for so great, so unspeakable a blessing, is to study the *Scriptures* with care, and to form our temper and practice accordingly. — To allow others that *liberty of private Judgment*, which we ourselves so ardently desire. To avoid uncharitableness towards such as differ from us, and to show our good-will to the persons of the *Papists*; whilst we so much and so justly abhor *their Religion*. Let us ever take care to watch against a *persecuting Spirit*, in all

all the branches and degrees of it ; and to lay the great stresse of *Religion*, where the *Scriptures of the New Testament* have laid it (not in abstruse notions and unintelligible subtleties : Not in Forms and Ceremonies, nor in an empty profession of the purest and best religion ; but) upon the sincere love of GOD and one another ; upon a due governing our passions and sensual appetites, and the habitual practice of universal Holinesse. For what signifieth it *what Church* any man belongs to, what profession of *Religion* he makes, or what advantages he enjoys ; — if he doth not love GOD and keep his commandments ? If he abuses his liberty to licentiousnesse ; and, in the midst of such *marvellous Light*, shows that *he prefers darknesse*, by leading a scandalous and wicked life ; which, of all others, is the *blackest Heresy*, and the most flagrant and most notorious *corruption and Apostasy* ?



T R A C T.

all the passages and degrees of it; and to lay
the principles of Religion, where the de-
votion of the New Testament have laid it; not in
abstract notions and unintelligible notions;
Not in Fables and Ceremonies; nor in an
empty pretension of the earth and last resur-
rection; but upon the sincere love of God and
our neighbour; upon a true governing of our
senses and carnal appetites; and the rational
practice of universal benevolence. For what sig-
nifies it when God says any man belongs to
what perfection of Religion he makes; or what
advantages he enjoys; — if he does not love
God, and keep his commandments? If he re-
fuses his liberty to licentiousness; and in the
midst of such monstrous lusts, those that
he professes himself by keeping a conscience
and wicked life; which of all others is the
blackest injury, and the most heinous and
most notorious transgression and sin.



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TRACT. II.

A

LETTER to a FRIEND

Concerning the

END and DESIGN

OF

PRAYER:

OR,

The REASONABLENESSE of praying to an
unchangeably wise, powerful, and good God.

In answer to the objections of the late Earl of
ROCHESTER, Mr. BLOUNT, and other mo-
dern *Deists*.

JOB xxi. 12—15. *They take the timbrel and harp, and
rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in
wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. There-
fore they say unto God, "Depart from us; for we desire
not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty,
that we should serve him? and what profit should we
have, if we pray unto him?"*

THE

TRACT II.

A

LETTER TO A FRIEND

Concerning the

END and DESIGN

OF

PRAYERS

OF

The Reasonableness of praying to an
unchangeably wise, powerful, and good God.

In answer to the objections of the late Earl of
Rochester, Mr. Brouncker, and other mo-
dern Deists.

For xxii. 12. — They take the timber and hark, and
rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in
vanity, and in a moment go down to the grave. They
say that they love God. "Deceive them not; for we desire
not the knowledge of thy name. What is the knowledge?"
"that we should serve him?" and what profit should we
have, if we pray unto him?"

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The Responsiveness

The following are the topics ready to be
discussed, and cannot stand the trial. For truth
fears not the light, but then appears in its na-
tive beauty and lustre, when most critically
viewed into, and most publicly laid open.

THE
END and DESIGN
OF
PRAYER.

DEAR SIR,



S religion is now under the severest examination, both among friends and enemies, it was (you may remember) the subject of our last conversation. And, after I had told you, that I could see nothing unreasonable in praying to an infinitely wise, powerful, good, and unchangeable being, you made me promise to write down my sentiments, that you might peruse them at your leisure; which I now do with all imaginable readinesse.

You and I have long agreed in this, that there cannot be a more severe reflection cast upon any thing, that goes under the name of *religion*, than the representing it as something not fit to be inquired into, and examined.

The

The *libertines* are thereupon ready to insult, and the *inquisitive* cannot forbear suspecting, that what is kept in the dark, is unreasonable, and cannot stand the trial. For *truth* fears not the light, but then appears in its native beauty and lustre, when most curiously pryed into, and most publicly laid open.

The objections of the *licentious*, and the inquiries of *studious* men, have generally issued in the service of *true religion*; by giving occasion to the pious and learned to ingage in the noble cause, to clear up the truth, to separate it from error and falshood, and to set it in the strongest point of light.

Nor should we, at this day, have had so many difficulties solved, had it not been for the attempts of *libertines* to overthrow all that is sacred; or for the queries of *virtuous* and *inquisitive* men, who are always the best friends to *true religion*. The number of *rational believers* is thus increased; and that confirmed by conviction and evidence, which was, perhaps, at first received only from a reverence to our teachers, or upon some other as weak foundation.

Among the many difficulties, which *sceptics* have started, this concerning *prayer* is none of the least, *viz.* "To what end should
" a *God* of infinite wisdom, goodnesse, and
" power, be petitioned to do what he sees
" and knows to be good and proper for any
" of his creatures? And how absurd must it
" be,

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“ be, to imagine that such imperfect beings,
 “ as we are, can, by our *prayers* (or any
 “ thing that we can possibly allege) move, or
 “ persuade, an all-wise and unchangeable
 “ being?”

But, in order to do them justice, I will give you their objections in their own words. Mr. *Blount*, in his notes upon *Apollonius Tyanæus* his life, p. 38. has these words; “ Some
 “ few of the *heathens* used no prayers at all,
 “ as thinking that the *Deity* was not to be
 “ moved by intreaty, or bribed by sacrifice*;
 “ and partly, because they held it a presumption in man to direct *God* what to do, and
 “ what to forbear.”

According to Bishop *Burnet's* representation, the ingenious and witty Earl of *Rocheſter* seems to have been of the same opinion; “ For he was persuaded that *prayers*
 “ could not be of much use, ſince that were
 “ to look on *God*, as a weak being, that would
 “ be overcome with importunities.”

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In

* See *Maximus Tyrius's* Dissertation, &c. *Tract.* IV.

† See Bishop *Burnet's* life of the Earl of *Rocheſter*, p. 53.

In the first edition, I mentioned the following passage, from my Lord *Shaſtbury's* *Charact.* Vol. I. p. 170, viz. “ They [*the antients*] esteemed this [that is, “ *soliloquy*, or *self-examination*] a more religious work than any *prayers*, or other duty, in the temple;” which I understood as a reflection on *prayer*, and other parts of public worship. But, as my Lord *Shaſtbury* might possibly design no more, by these words, than to point

In order to answer them fairly and fully, I will make them all due concessions, and do grant freely,

I. That *prayer* was not instituted to inform *God* of any thing, as if he did not know it of himself.

The best foundation in divinity is to form just and worthy notions of the attributes of *God*. That he is indued with *knowledge*, is manifest from his works; and, as he is a *necessary being*, his *knowledge* must be *infinite*. And, if he be omniscient, this first observation is confirmed beyond dispute. For it is impossible to inform him that knows all things, inasmuch as what is infinite admits of no addition. He, that made us, knows our frame, and all our circumstances; what we are, and what we do; nay, what we can be, or do, in all possible cases, and upon all suppositions.

Upon this account, there is no occasion for our much speaking; for our heavenly Father knows what things we have need of, before we ask him². The heathens might phansy that their gods wanted to be informed; but this is unworthy of him, whose understanding is infinite.

II. Nor was *prayer* instituted, in order to importune infinite goodnesse, as if it were slow and

point out the comparative excellence of *soliloquy*;— I have not here ranked him among those, who have represented *prayer*, as an uselesse, or ridiculous thing.

² Matt. vi. 7, 8.

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and backward to exert itself; or as if we could move *God*, by our importunity, to depart from his stedy, unchangeable measures of counsel and action.

No! *God* is wise, and good, and unchangeable; and therefore neither needs to be urged to do good, when and where it is proper; nor can he (upon any account) be induced to vary from the scheme, which infinite wisdom dictated.

Indeed all comparisons fall short, and rather lessen than aggrandize the thing: But (*if I may be allowed to compare small things to great*) you may as well go to persuade a rock to melt, or a mountain to remove out of its place, as use words to persuade *God* to do an unwise, unholy, or unjust thing.

That *Pathos* of eloquence, which would move the most resolved and dispassionate among men, could not affect *God*. Your favorites, *Tully* and *Demosthenes*, could have prevailed nothing in such a case; neither uplifted hands, nor weeping eyes, nor the most moving *rhetoric* of looks, words, or action, would make any impression. I acknowledge (with *Mr. Blount's* *heathens*) that *God* is not to be moved (in such cases) by *intreaties*, nor bribed by *sacrifice*; and that it would be presumption in man to direct him (in such, or in any other instances) what to do, or what to forbear. And, with my Lord *Rocheſter*, that the *Deity* is not so weak a being, as to be

overcome by importunities. There is no bribing, flattering, melting, or over-aweing him. *He is of one mind, and who can turn him?* The generality of the *heathens* might hope, perhaps, to prevail with *their Gods*, by a clamorous importunity, and *much speaking*; but *christians* are forbid such vain repetitions. For our requests can no more alter the divine purposes, than our praises can add any thing to *God's* perfection, or happiness.

By this time, I suppose, you may fear that I have given up the point; and inquire,—
 “ To what end then should we pray at all;
 “ —if we can neither inform, nor persuade
 “ *God*? In other cases we argue, for the reasonableness of a thing, from common consent. And, if this will hold (you may allege, that) it seems to be the voice of reason, and the prevailing sense of mankind, that men should call upon *God*, by prayer and praise, for a supply of their wants, a redress of their grievances, and as a grateful acknowledgement of all their mercies. And thus the *holy scripture* also represents the matter, when it advises *christians*, *To be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make their requests known unto God^a*. And seems to set it forth as a possible thing for man to move *God*, by intimating, that *Jacob wrestled, had power*
 “ with

^a Phil. iv. 6, 7.

^b Gen. 17, 18.
^c John x
^f Luke x

“ *with God, and prevailed^b. That Elias*
 “ *was but a man, and yet by his prayer he*
 “ *prevailed with God, to withhold rain from*
 “ *the land of Israel, three years and an half;*
 “ *And again he prayed, and the heavens gave*
 “ *rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit^c.*
 “ *And has not our Lord also bid his disciples,*
 “ *Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall*
 “ *find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you?*
 “ *confirming it thus, For commonly such as ask*
 “ *(importunately of men) receive, And he*
 “ *that earnestly seeketh (at the hands of his*
 “ *fellow-creature) findeth; and unto him that*
 “ *knocketh, it shall be opened. And how*
 “ *much more might successe be hoped for,*
 “ *from the infinitely wise and affectionate*
 “ *father of the universe, the common friend*
 “ *and parent of all^d? And again he declared,*
 “ *that whatsoever they should ask in his name,*
 “ *they should receive^e.*
 “ *To this end spake he the parable of the*
 “ *woman’s troubling the unjust judge, till she*
 “ *obtained her request^f; and the parable of*
 “ *the man that went to borrow loaves of his*
 “ *friend at midnight, who also prevailed by*
 “ *his importunity^g. Nay, it is usual in*
 “ *scripture to represent God as an affectionate*
 “ *parent*

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^b Gen. xxxii. 24; 28. Hof. xii. 3. ^c James v.
 17, 18. ^d Matt. vii. 7—11. Luke xi. 9—13.
^e John xiv. 13. and xv. 7; 16. and xvi. 23, 24.
^f Luke xviii. 1—8. ^g Luke xi. 5—8.

“parent, listening to the cries of his children, and moved by them^h”.

To all which I answer,—That, as to the common and prevailing sentiments of mankind, they are of no moment, unless they be founded upon truth and reason. And, as to the queries from *holy scripture*, it is evident that *God* has not a body, tho’ several parts and members of the human body be, in *holy writ*, ascribed to him. In like manner, all human passions, defects and imperfections are to be far removed from *God*; and such representations to be looked upon, only as accommodations to our capacities; as human ways of speaking, or familiar comparisons, by way of condescension to us, and to our manner of thinking and expressing ourselves.

For whoever would understand the *holy scriptures*, must remember that they are calculated to plant and promote *religion*, even among the lowest of mankind; and, as such, their language is *popular*, and speaks according to common appearances. They meekly condescend (as our *Blessed Lord* did) to *instruct the poor*, and that after a most easy and familiar way, speaking of things spiritual and divine, in the language and after the manner of men.

Thus

• Matt. vii. 9, 10, 11. Psal. ciii. 13.

Thus, in the case before us, inasmuch as men want to be informed of the circumstances of the distressed, and to be importuned to do good; the *sacred writers*, by way of *analogy*, apply this to *God*. Not that he really wants to be informed, or importuned to help, where it is proper; but only that the events are, in some measure, alike; *viz.* *God*, in all proper cases, grants mercies, in consequence of mens praying for them; as parents regard the requests of their obedient, or penitent, children.

But, though the events be alike (and, upon that account, they are spoken of, in the same phrase, and manner) yet the principles, from which such events proceed, are by no means alike. For earthly parents are commonly moved by pity and sympathy, which have a mixture of passion and uneasiness in them. *God* acts only from pure reason, and supreme goodness. An earthly parent may mistake the case, and grant requests, or deny them improperly; through an excess of fondness, or for want of natural affection; but unerring wisdom and infinite goodness can never do so. So far the *analogy* holds, that our *heavenly father* (as well as an earthly parent) bestows favors upon the praying and well-disposed, which he withholds from such as are of a different temper and practice.

Thus, I think, I have answered the *queries* from *holy scripture*, and fully vindicated my own concessions.

I therefore now return to the *objections*, which the *sceptics* pretend to draw from *reason*.

But, before I procede to what I reckon the chief end of *prayer*, and the *main solution* of their *difficulties*, I would propose this, as one, and that no inconsiderable advantage of *prayer*, *viz.* that *God* does hereby most graciously condescend to our infirmities, in allowing, nay inviting us, this way, to relieve our hearts, when most oppressed; by pouring out our moans and complaints into his ear; as into the ear of one that is most tenderly concerned for us, and kindly and mercifully disposed to relieve us. For, though he knows it more exactly than we can lay it before him; yet it is a great relief, under any pressing calamity, to unbosom ourselves, and give a vent to the fulnesse of our hearts, in the presence of a wise and compassionate friend; even though he be perfectly acquainted with the case, and all its attending circumstances. To talk it over to ourselves; and, in *perfect solitude*, to give our distressed thoughts *breath* and *accent*, can by no means afford that relief, which the laying it before a kind, powerful, and wise friend, is capable of affording. And, finally, there are many cases, which it may be improper to spread before

before any one, except the infinitely wise and benevolent *ruler* of all, who considers our frame, who pities our infirmities, and who will not expose us, nor take any advantages against us, from his knowledge of our distresses; no, nor of our many crimes and follies neither; if we do but sincerely repent of them, and carefully guard against them for the time to come.

But, to return to the *main solution*, I would ask (though *omniscience* cannot want to be informed, nor *infinite wisdom and goodnesse* to be importuned to do what is proper, nor the *unchangeable ruler of the universe* alter his counsels, or measures of action; yet) where is the absurdity, if we should suppose that he (who has laid the *plan* of the *natural world*, in such an amazing harmony, order, and proportion; and that has adjusted things to things, in such exact number, weight and measure) may have laid the plan of the *moral, or rational world*, in a signal and harmonious correspondence to the *natural world*; as well as connected and proportioned the several parts of the *moral scheme* to one another? And that thus there may be a distinction frequently made, even in this world, between such as pray, and such as neglect it?

Nay, does not *history, reason, and observation*¹ evidently show, that, in several instances, it is actually so? *i. e.* the events in the

¹ See Dr. Burnet's *sacred Theory of the earth*,

the *natural world*, which bring judgment, or mercy, to *mankind*, are, by the infinite wisdom and power of the *creator* and *governor* of all, so calculated, as only to be consequences of his framing the *heavens* and the *earth*, and preserving their being and motions in that state and order, to which (in pursuance of their first disposition) they naturally tended.

And yet how exactly do such consequences happen at the appointed seasons, so as to reward the *righteous*, and punish the *guilty*?

“ To this purpose it deserves to be inquired, whether *God* did not calculate the structure of the *primæval heavens* and *earth*, so as greatly to conduce to the *paradisiacal* happiness, to bless man in his state of innocence and integrity? And afterwards, as remarkably sute the course of nature to the state of things, to curse the earth with barrenness, as a just judgment upon the disobedient?”

“ Did he not, by the particular constitution of the *heavens* and the *earth*, before the flood, occasion the world, that then was, to perish by an *universal deluge*, when the earth was degenerate, and all flesh had corrupted their ways?”

“ * And did he not very wonderfully, by the like appointment, cause a *vulcano* to break

* If any of these instances be found to be *miraculous*, and not the consequences of the *original plan* of creation

(as

“ break out in a dreadful shower of fire and
 “ brimstone, nigh the place where *Sodom*
 “ and *Gomorrhah* stood, destroying them sud-
 “ denly, together with two neighboring ci-
 “ ties, just when their sins were grown to
 “ an enormous height?

“ And who, without the strongest preju-
 “ dices, can observe, how, by the same wise
 “ and over-ruling *providence*, he made way
 “ for the spread of the *christian doctrine*
 “ (when the time fixed in the *scheme of di-*
 “ *vine providence*, and pointed out by *antient*
 “ *prophecies*, was fully come) by the great
 “ increase of knowlege, and the easy inter-
 “ course thro’ the *Roman empire*?

“ And, finally, are there not a great many
 “ things to persuade us, that *God* has made
 “ the present earth of such a frame and struc-
 “ ture, as that it tends towards a *conflagra-*
 “ *tion* (as naturally as the *antediluvian earth*
 “ tended towards an *universal deluge*) and
 “ that it will actually blaze out, when the
 “ affairs of *providence* are prepared for it,
 “ and the inhabitants of this *earthly globe* are
 “ ripe for *judgment*, or *mercy*?”

Thus

(as indeed I am not positive, and therefore have propo-
 sed them as queries) it is only placing them under the
 head of *interposition*, and leaving every one to substitute
 what instances he finds to be just and well grounded.
 For (tho’ I may not have hit upon them) I am persuaded
 there are numberlesse instances of such an *harmony*,
 which lie open clearly to the view of superior beings;
 tho’ the film upon our eyes, in this state of darknesse, and
 imperfection, may intercept the glorious prospect.

Thus has the vast, the incomprehensible wisdom of *God* adapted the *natural* and *moral* world one to another, so as to run hand in hand, and correspond in their great *crises*, and some more remarkable conjunctures. And a close observer will find it so, in many cases, of a more particular nature. Thus the vicious and loose (who are generally the contemners of *prayer* and devotion) are punished with several diseases and disasters, to which the pious and the temperate are not exposed; the rash, the passionate, and the proud, are more obnoxious to evils than the religious and meek, the humble and resigned; and the same holds good in many other cases.

Well, and if *God* have thus laid the *plan* of the *moral world*, then he may be *unchangeable*, and yet grant favors in answer to *prayers*, which favors he would have granted to none but the *suppliant*. Nay, upon this supposition, he would be *changeable*, and vary from his *scheme*, if he equally regarded the *praying* and the *prayerlesse*.

Such a notion of the *original plan* of things advances the glory of *God*, and magnifies his knowlege and wisdom, goodnesse and power, to a stupendous degree; inasmuch as it implies his foreseeing¹ who would pray, and who

¹ Such persons as suppose the *prescience* of the *actions* of *moral agents* to be contradictory and absurd, must allow that the *great and wise governor of the world*, is stedily resolved

who would not pray ; and when, and with what propriety and sincerity, every prayer would be offered up, that ever should be made upon earth, from the *creation* to the *consummation of all things*. And that he has calculated a *scheme*, which is large enough to take in an inconceivable variety of cases ; and, in the common course of things, very frequently to proportion blessings to the frequency, propriety, and sincerity of every man's petitions.

This I call the *plan of creation*.

But it is altogether reasonable to think that God has also appointed his own interposition (either mediately, or immediately) in some particular cases, as part of the *original plan of his providence over this earth* ; because no *scheme* (perhaps) can be so calculated as to reach the designed end, without the *divine interposition*, in some particular cases and conjunctures.

resolved to deal with men according to their conduct ; whenever, or by what means soever, he comes acquainted therewith. But, as they cannot ascribe so much (as I have done) to the *plan of creation*, they must ascribe more to that of *the divine government and interposition*. However, I must confesse that, for my own part, I know not how to account for so many clear and expresse *prophecies*, without allowing *the divine prescience*. Undoubtedly, the treachery of Judas, in betraying our LORD ; and the malice and wickednesse of the Jews, in procuring his death, were as planely *matters of free choice, or the actions of moral agents*, as any that can be named ; and yet they seem to have been predicted, not as *probable*, but as *certain*.

junctions. Nor is this any more than what is unavoidable, where the temporal interests of men are so frequently opposite and inconsistent. Not but that I reckon the *divine interposition*^m to be rare and unusual, and only where the case does more eminently require it; and am thoroughly convinced, that neither the *natural course of things*, in consequence of the *plan of creation*, nor that *divine interposition* (which is only a part of the *plan of providence*) does always make a *distinction* between the *righteous* and the *wicked*, in this *present state of things*; which only argues that the *scheme of providence* reaches into *another state*; and, in this enlarged view, we may affirm that God will put a *thorough and universal distinction* between them that seek his face, and them that seek it not.

To set this matter in a different light, I would further observe, that, among men, there is a certain *temper and disposition of mind*, which a *wise giver* expects in such as he *favours*; and that, without a regard thereto, bounty and beneficence would be weaknesse and imprudence. Will a wise man be as kind to the carelesse, the perverse, and the ungrateful; as to the suppliant, the modest, the humble, and the gratefulⁿ? 'Till the
eternal,

^m *Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus Inciderit.*

Horat. de arte poet.

ⁿ *Xenophon. Cyropæd. edit. Hutchinson, 4^{to}, L. 1.*

p. 67, &c. ὁ θεὸς δὲ, ὁ παῖς, ἐπὶ ὁ κύριος, κ. τ. λ.

“ Father

eternal, unalterable relations of things cease,
 God cannot be supposed to love the impious
 and

“ Father, said *Cyrus*, I will always continue using
 “ my utmost care, according to your instruction, to
 “ render the gods propitious to us, and willing to give
 “ us their advice and direction. For I remember to
 “ have heard it from you, that, as from men, so like-
 “ wise from the gods, the most likely person to obtain
 “ his fute, is not he, who, when he is in distresse, flat-
 “ ters servilely; but he who, in his most happy circum-
 “ stances, is mindful of the gods. And you used to
 “ say, that it was in the same manner that one ought
 “ to cultivate friends.” “ Therefore, *child*, said he,
 “ upon the account of this your care, you now apply
 “ to *the gods*, and make your requests to them, with
 “ the more pleasure; and you have the better hopes to
 “ obtain what you ask, appearing to yourself conscious
 “ that you never neglected them.” “ Truly, *Father*
 “ (said he) I am, for that reason, in such a temper of
 “ of mind, with respect to *the gods*, as to reckon them
 “ my friends.” — “ Well *child* (said he) do you
 “ remember those other opinions that we heretofore
 “ agreed in? as that, in all things, that the gods be-
 “ stow, such men, as have acquired skill and know-
 “ lege in them, act and succede better, than they who
 “ are ignorant in them? that the laborious succede bet-
 “ ter than the idle? that the diligent and the careful live
 “ with more security than the negligent and carelesse?
 “ and that therefore rendering ourselves such as we
 “ ought to be, we should, then, make *our prayers* to
 “ *the gods* for their blessings?” Yes, indeed, saith *Cy-
 rus*, I do remember to have heard these things from
 “ you, and I was forced to submit to your reasoning.
 “ For, I know, you used to say, that it was down-
 “ right impiety for such as had never learned to ride,
 “ to supplicate the gods for victory in engagements of
 “ horse; or, for such as had never learned the use of the
 “ bow, to ask the superiority at this very weapon, over
 “ those who understood it; or for such as knew not how
 “ to steer, to pray that they might preserve ships in the
 “ quality

and disobedient, as well as the pious, the penitent, the virtuous, and the suppliant.

If therefore it can be made appear that *prayer* tends to plant and cherish this temper and disposition in man, which *God* loves; and for which, in the *scheme of providence*, he has provided blessing and mercy; and that the neglect of *prayer* is attended with the contrary disposition, which *God* disapproves, and for which, in the *scheme of providence*, he has provided *punishments*;— then the difficulty vanishes at once; and there is no contradiction in saying, that an *unchangeable God* may answer *prayers*; nay, that it is reasonable for men, and their plane duty, to pray to a *wise and good God*; inasmuch as they are thereby made more meet to partake of his favors.

The *rational* and *apostolical* distinction of our *duty* is, into that of *piety*, *benevolence*, and *self-government*; or, in other words, *our duty towards God, towards our neighbor, and towards*

“ quality of pilots; or for such as have not sown wheat,
 “ to pray that they might have a good crop of it; or for
 “ such as are not watchful in war, to pray that they may
 “ be preserved in safety. For that all such things were
 “ contrary to the settled laws of *the gods*. And you
 “ said, that such, as made *impious prayers*, would, pro-
 “ bably, meet with disappointments from *the gods*; as
 “ such would fail of successe with *men*, who should de-
 “ fire things contrary to all *human laws*.”

These passages are so very remarkable, as coming from the pen of an *heathen*, and so much illustrate my present subject, that I thought it better to give the *English* reader Mr. *Aspley's* translation, than quote the *Greek*, which few would understand.

towards ourselves. For, tho' we may, in some sense, be said to bear some *relation* to the *whole universe*, as we are the *inhabitants* of this *earth*, and this *earth* a part of the *planetary system*, and this *system* only a part of the *universe*, that bears some *relation* to other *systems*; yet, as the other *planetary systems* are at such an immense distance; yea, and the *globes* of this our *system* are so far separated, we have no knowlege of what passes there, nor consequently any duty arising from thence; but only that of a general *benevolence* to all rational beings.

And, tho' we allow that God, if he sees fit, may send *angels*, upon some peculiar occasions, to guard and assist us; yet (if they are now imployed) their agency is so commonly according to the *natural course of things*; and their presence, at any particular time, so uncertain, that the *relation* between us and them is more rarely brought into the account. Tho' reverence is unquestionably due to *superior beings*, when it is known that they are present; and gratitude is always due to the *benevolent*, and more especially to our benefactors. But, tho' the presence of finite beings is not so easy to be discovered, when they themselves are invisible, and their actions not distinguishable from the common course of nature; yet, we may be assured that *God* is always present, tho' invisible, because he is necessarily so. Men are frequently present

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with

with us, and visible; and can share in the effects of our behavior, when absent; and we ourselves are compounded of *body* and *spirit*, which bear a *mutual relation* to one another, and require *mutual duties*.

Taking this, therefore, for a just and comprehensive distinction of our duty; I shall briefly go over each of the *branches*, to show what a *practical* influence *prayer* has upon every one of them, and how much it disposes men to a more watchful and constant discharge of every part of their duty.

As to *godliness*. — By much thinking upon any thing, we commonly grow better acquainted with it; and of all knowlege, the knowlege of *God* is to be persued, for it leads to *life eternal*°. It is impossible to pray, without thinking upon *God*, the great object of religious worship; and I am persuaded, that it is very much owing to *prayer*, that the being and perfections of *God* are so generally known and acknowledged.

From considering that there is a *God*, we naturally passe on to consider the *relation* between him and us.

“ This is the *first cause* of me, and of all
 “ things; from whom I received my being,
 “ and all my powers and faculties, and upon
 “ whom I depend every moment! The om-
 “ nipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent
 “ law-giver

° John xvii. 3.

“ law-giver and judge! My kind benefactor,
 “ who sustains me, and provides for me, ob-
 “ serves my whole deportment, and is a con-
 “ stant witnesse to all I think, and speak,
 “ and do! Justice requires that I imploy my
 “ being, powers, and faculties, and all my
 “ injoyments, agreeably to the will of my
 “ creator and benefactor, my law-giver and
 “ my judge, *i. e.* rationally, or piously and
 “ virtuously! Wisdom requires that I should
 “ imitate the most perfect being, to the best
 “ of my abilities; and gratitude requires,
 “ that I should please my best friend, as
 “ much as I can!”

Now homage and honor, imitation and obedience are the best oblations I can offer him. An humble, well-disposed heart, and a pious, prudent life, are *sacrifices with which his soul is always well pleased.*

Such intense and frequent thinking upon God must inlarge our knowlege of him, and tend to impress his image and similitude^p. And methinks we should be glad to know,

E 2

and

^p “ Should it be said, *That these great and useful purposes may be answered by serious meditation alone.*
 “ And, if so, to what end is prayer enjoined? Or how
 “ can it be shown to be a rational and religious obligation?
 “ — I would answer to this, that the prescribing *Pray-*
 “ *er*, as a fixed and necessary duty, must induce all
 “ such, as pay a conscientious regard to the authority
 “ of the divine legislator, to enter frequently upon these
 “ useful meditations. Whereas, if they were left at
 “ large, and at their full liberty, they might be in-
 “ clined

and make use of, the proper means to obtain so very valuable an end. For we are more concerned to make him our friend, who has the disposal of the rewards and punishments of

“clined to omit them, or ingage in them but seldom;
“and consequently their use and efficacy might be
“greatly abated, if not quite destroyed, by their being
“generally neglected.

“If it be urged further (and I know of nothing else
“that can be objected) *that an expresse command to meditate often as often, as it is now supposed to be our duty to pray, and on the very same weighty and momentous subjects, must be a sufficient mean, in reason; and consequently in all wise government, to prevent this ill effect.*

“I answer again; that, in an immediate and solemn
“addresse to [God,] our maker, our attention is likely
“to be more close, and our sense of things more strong
“and lively, than in any common meditation. Because we have, in a particular manner, the awe of an
“omniscient and almighty being, to restrain us from
“carelessness and levity. If our discourse, upon all
“occasions, would be more aptly and correctly formed,
“if it was directly presented to some eminent personage,
“of whose wisdom and dignity of character we had an
“high veneration, than can reasonably be expected in
“a free soliloquy, where we converse only with ourselves; — our integrity and concern of mind, in the
“other paralel case (where the *heart* itself is more accurately and strictly scanned) must be influenced in
“proportion. — No man, who knows himself and the
“common workings of human nature, can possibly
“doubt of this. — Here is, therefore, a very great and
“beneficial effect; a peculiar, strong inforcement of
“religion and virtue, that is not so likely to be produced by *meditation alone.*

“And this, I think, is an unanswerable defence of
“its being made, by *revelation*, a stated and universal
“branch of instituted duty”. [See Mr. *Foster's Sermons*, vol. iv. p. 322, &c.]

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of another state, than the greatest malefactor can be to procure the friendship of any earthly judge. Let the wicked seriously, and for some time, try the influence and efficacy of daily *prayer*; and they will find it will do more towards reforming them, than all their *admired heathen authors*, or the *boasted power of philosophy*. For when we, in an humble and composed manner, addresse ourselves to *God by prayer*, it not only diverts the thoughts at present, from sin and folly (which the turning to any business, or amusement, might, in some measure, do;) but *devout prayer* has also an apt tendency to root out the love of sin; and to plant, in its stead, good dispositions and virtuous desires.

As to our duty towards our neighbor; — Prayer does likewise influence us to the discharge of this part of our duty. For this comes recommended to us, both as the will of God, and as tending to the benefit of mankind. Now *prayer* not only composes the soul to that thoughtfulness and deliberation (which is the most proper frame for considering all obligations;) but it likewise reduces the mind to resignation, and a flexible temper, so as to incline us *to have respect unto all God's commandments*; and, among these, *justice and charity* are none of the least.

And *prayer* does not only cherish this general good disposition; but that part of *prayer*, commonly called *intercession*, does more im-

mediately tend to plant and cherish love, which is the fulfilling of the law, and has a most noble, extensive and happy influence.

As for instance — Do I *pray* for an enemy? This must make, or suppose, me inclined to forgive him. Do I *pray* for friends? This implies that I continue to wish them well, and strengthens the sacred bands of friendship, refines and exalts the noble passion, and makes it *christian* and *divine*; lays the foundation deeper, and is the most proper method to make it sincere and perpetual. Do I *pray* for all mankind? This enlarges, or maintains, my charity and benevolence towards all such as are of that nature, of which I myself have the happiness to partake; — and cherishes my disposition to do any of them good, as they fall in my way, but especially to the sincerely virtuous and holy.

Do I *pray* for superiors, inferiors, or equals? This were to trifle with the great God, if it were not accompanied with resolutions of filling up every relation in life with proper duty. *Prayers* for the afflicted, when rational and sincere, are accompanied with what succor and relief we can conveniently afford them. And, when we petition God to instruct the ignorant, reclaim the wicked, or assist the righteous to persevere, it is our duty to use endeavors (as well as *prayers*) for promoting so desirable a work. *He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, doeth*

doeth save a soul from death, and hide him a multitude of sins.

As to our duty towards ourselves; — As we are a compound of soul and body, Prayer reminds us of our duty towards both, *i. e.* chiefly to mind the affairs of the soul; and, in subordination thereto, the affairs of the body.

Confession of sin brings our faults to mind, and may well make us sorry and ashamed, and sincerely resolve to behave in another manner.

Petitions for mercy teach us our own weak and dependent state; and may humble us, and should make us look for help from above, and to act as obliged, dependent beings.

Praise and thanksgiving secretly reproach us, that we have made no better returns for so many and such great favors; and point out what ought to be our future conduct.

He, that daily goes to God by prayer, has a daily check upon his conscience, and a daily spur to repentance, care, and watchfulness; he lives, as it were, under a constant sense of the observation of the supreme ruler, which (if any thing can) will make him circumspect. If such a one cannot find out the bent and inclination of his own heart, and the tenor and habit of his own life; — no man can. And, if he do not prefer the soul to the body, rational to sensual enjoyments, and eternity to

the things of time, his prayers are fruitlesse, and his expectations vain.

The sum of what has been said comes to this. Infinite, unerring wisdom, uncontrollable power, and superlative goodnesse, have fixed, unalterably fixed, *the terms of acceptance*; with which terms the creatures are made acquainted: and, as they eventually comply, or disobey, their requests are finally heard, or denied, and they themselves rewarded, or punished^r. If *daily prayer* cherish, in any man, such a pious disposition, then God will hear and answer him; not because he prostrates himself before God, and puts up now and then a few petitions; but because the petitions, he puts up, either model his heart (or flow from an heart already modelled) to such a frame and disposition, as the wise and good *governor* of all may rationally expect, in such as partake of his favors^r.

If such a person be denied any particular request, he will, in the end, be no loser by it.

^r “ The best method (says Socrates, to his pupil Alcibiades) that you can make use of, to draw down blessings from heaven upon yourself, and to render your prayers acceptable, will be to live in a constant practice of your duty, both towards the Gods and towards men.” [See Plato’s dialogue upon prayer, intitled, Alcibiades the 2d.]

^r *Hunc collatis precibus adoramus, ab hoc iusta, & honesta, & auditu ejus condigna, deprecemur; non quo ipse desideret supplices nos esse, aut amet subterni tot millium venerationem videre. Utilitas hæc nostra est, & commodi*

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it. For all things work together for his good. And what of injoyment he wants, in this present state of trial and discipline, shall be abundantly made up to him, in a future and better state; — *the scheme of providence* being so calculated, as to reach beyond the present state of *existence*.

We need not wonder, then, that good men ask for many things, in this life, which God does not think proper to grant them. This is not a state of retribution, and therefore many things, that might gratifie us, are at present withheld, as unfit for us; and nothing could be a greater curse, than to grant us every thing that our fancies might desire, or wish for, in this state of darknesse and imperfection^c. Whereas, in a state of recompence, the desires will not excede the injoyments.

Thus

modi nostri rationem spectans. Nam, quia proni ad culpas, & ad libidinis varios appetitus vitio sumus infirmitatis ingenitæ; patitur se semper nostris cogitationibus concipi, ut dum illum oramus, & mereri ejus contendimus munera, accipiamus innocentiae voluptatem, & ab omni nos labe, delictorum omnium amputatione, purgemus. Ar-nob. l. i. p. 18.

^c The Sum of *Socrates's* devotions was a short prayer, which a *Greek Poet* composed for the use of his friends,

Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν ἔδρα, καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνεύκτοις,
Ἄμμι δίδε, τὰ δὲ δέονα καὶ εὐχομένοις ἀπαλέξοις.

*Optima da nobis, seu te, Pater, illā rogemus,
Seu non; & contra nocitura rogitantibus arce.*

“ O

Thus we may know, that God will answer prayers, without *immediate visions or revelations*; or without any such *impressions*, as may intimate to us our *present acceptance* ¹.

I will only add, that the prayers of a good man may, in many cases, be rationally expected *to avail* for others; inasmuch as, when God grants such requests, he grants them, because the things petitioned for, are wise, and proper, and rational in themselves, (without which circumstances, he will never grant any request) and because of his great love to piety, which he rewards, honors, and encourages, by thus gratifying the pious man, and regarding the *intercessions* of the virtuous and holy ².

As I have laid before you the *solution*, allow me to conclude with some *corollaries*.

Corol. I. The *objections* of the *sceptics* are not insuperable; and particularly it is *rational* to pray to an *infinitely wise, good, and unchangeable God*; inasmuch as *prayer* transforms

us

“ O *Jupiter*, King, give us good things, whether we ask for them, or no; and drive away evil things, even though we should pray for them.”

He also very much recommended a form of prayer, made use of by the *Lacedæmonians*, “ in which they petitioned the Gods to give them all good things, *as long as they continued virtuous*.”

¹ See Dr. Calamy's life of Mr. How, 8vo, p. 22.

² See Mr. Foster's Sermons, Vol. IV. Serm. XIV. mentions

us into his *moral image*^w, and plants, or cherishes, such a frame of soul, as, according to the wise *scheme of providence*, he will vouchsafe to bless.

Corol. II. If God would bestow all other blessings upon us, without our *praying* for them, it would be an unspeakable detriment to us; if we thereby lost that pious and humble, resigned and obedient temper, that sense of *God* and *religion*, and of the strength of our obligations to virtue or holiness, which are acquired and promoted by frequent *prayer*.

Corol. III. *Prayer* is a duty of *natural*, as well as of *reveled religion*^x.

It is true, it is only an instrumental duty, and has the nature of *a mean* to an end; *that is*, to improve us in the love of virtue and goodness. But whoever would attain any end, must make use of the necessary means. Food is not life itself; it is only one of the means of life; but it ought not therefore to be

^w The change is in *us*, and not in *God*; and *Simplicius* (in his notes upon *Epietetus*, c. 38.) very justly mentions it as an idle phanſy, to suppose, "that the Gods are drawn aside by gifts, and oblations, from their own judgment of things. On the other hand, he says, that repentance, supplications, and prayers, and the like, ought to draw us nearer to God, not God nearer to us. As, in a ship, by fastening a cable to a firm rock, we intend not to draw the rock to the ship, but the ship to the rock."

^x Mr. *Wollaston* (in his *Religion of nature delineated*, p. 120, &c.) has proved *prayer* to be a duty of *natural religion*, from other considerations, particularly from the relation, in which we stand to the *first being*, and from the *reason* and *truth* of things.

be neglected. — On the contrary, it deserves to be esteemed, and made use of, for that very reason, *viz.* because it is one of the proper means to that important end.

They do not seem to me, either to have considered the matter thoroughly, or to have so much regard for *virtue*, as they ought to have, who neglect *prayer*, and plead that they have no occasion to make use of it.

Corol. IV. It is not *words* but *thoughts*, that are principally to be regarded in our *prayers*. For God and man regard the wishes and desires of

*Vir bonus, omne forum quem spectat, & omne tribunal,
Quandocunque deos vel porco, vel bove placat;
Jane Pater, clare, clare quum dixit, Apollo:
Labra movet, metuens audiri, Pulchra Laverha
Da mihi fallere, da justum sanctumque videri:
Noctem peccatis, & fraudibus objice nubem.*

HOR. lib. I. ep. 16.

Thus *Juvenal*, Satyr. 6. speaks of the superstitious Egyptian.

*Allius lacrymæ, mentitaque manera præstant,
Ut veniam culpæ non abnuat; anseri magno
Scilicet, & tenui popano, corruptus Osiris.*

And thus also *Persius* rallies the prayers and wishes of wicked and hypocritical men,

*Haud cuivis promptum est murmurque, humilesque sus-
surros
Tollere de templo; & aperto vivere voto.
Mens bona, fama, fides, hæc clare & ut audiat hospes:
Illa sibi introrsum, & sub lingua immurmurat, O si
Ebullit*

of the heart, as the only genuine and sincere prayer. I own, that an addressing *God* with our wishes is the common notion of prayer; but I am satisfied, that *God* regards the habitual bent and inclination of the soul, (whether true virtue, or covetousness, ambition or voluptuousness) more than *transient petitions*, though they should be, for the time, sincere; and consequently much more than the most elegant forms, or the most devout expressions, that are not accompanied with internal desires. Our *thoughts* are our *prayers*, which *God* can understand as well without words, as with them, and according to our habitual disposition may we expect to be treated both here and hereafter.

Corol.

Ebullit patrum præclarum funus! &, O si
Sub rostro crepet argenti mihi seria dextro
Hercule! pupillumve utinam, quem proximus hæres
Impello, expungam! &c. &c. &c. PERS. sat. 2.

But, inasmuch as a decent and agreeable performance of this great duty shews an higher reverence and regard for *God* and divine things,—does more promote the practical influence,—and represents religion as more amiable to mankind in general; I would recommend the noble hints, which *Mr. Wollaston* has given in his *Religion of nature delineated*, p. 120, &c.—and the excellent forms, which are annexed to the *Plane account of the nature and end of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper*;—to all such as are desirous of assistance in performing this duty, with honor and decency, ease and elegance. For there may be as much of the true *spirit of prayer*, and certainly will be less confusion, where there is the most clear method, and most just and happy manner of expression.

be neglected. — On the contrary, it deserves to be esteemed, and made use of, for that very reason, *viz.* because it is one of the proper means to that important end.

They do not seem to me, either to have considered the matter thoroughly, or to have so much regard for *virtue*, as they ought to have, who neglect *prayer*, and plead that they have no occasion to make use of it.

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Quandocunque deos vel porco, vel bove placat;
Jane Pater, clare, clare quum dixit, Apollo:
Labra movet, metuens audiri, Pulchra Laverna
Da mihi fallere, da justum sanctumque videri:
Noctem peccatis, & fraudibus objice nubem.*

HOR. lib. I. ep. 16.

Thus *Juvenal*, Satyr. 6. speaks of the superstitious *Egyptian*.

*Illius lacrymæ, mentitaque manera præstant,
Ut veniam culpæ non abnuat; anseri magno
Scilicet, & tenui popano, corruptus Osiris.*

And thus also *Perfius* rallies the prayers and wishes of wicked and hypocritical men,

*Haud cuivis promptum est murmurque, humilesque sus-
surros
Tollere de templo; & aperto vivere voto.
Mens bona, fama, fides, hæc clare & ut audiat hospes:
Illa sibi introrsum, & sub lingua immurmurat, O si
Ebullit*

of the heart, as the only genuine and sincere prayer. I own, that an addressing *God* with our wishes is the common notion of prayer; but I am satisfied, that *God* regards the habitual bent and inclination of the soul, (whether true virtue, or covetousness, ambition or voluptuousness) more than *transient petitions*, though they should be, for the time, sincere; and consequently much more than the most elegant forms, or the most devout expressions, that are not accompanied with internal desires. Our *thoughts* are our *prayers*, which *God* can understand as well without words, as with them, and according to our habitual disposition may we expect to be treated both here and hereafter.

Corol.

Ebullit patruī praeclarum funus! &, O si
Sub rostro crepet argenti mihi seria dextro
Hercule! pupillumve utinam, quem proximus hæres
Impello, expungam! &c. &c. &c. PERS. sat. 2.

But, inasmuch as a decent and agreeable performance of this great duty shews an higher reverence and regard for *God* and divine things,—does more promote the practical influence,—and represents religion as more amiable to mankind in general; I would recommend the noble hints, which Mr. *Wollaston* has given in his *Religion of nature delineated*, p. 120, &c.—and the excellent forms, which are annexed to the *Plane account of the nature and end of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper*;—to all such as are desirous of assistance in performing this duty, with honor and decency, ease and elegance. For there may be as much of the true *spirit of prayer*, and certainly will be less confusion, where there is the most clear method, and most just and happy manner of expression.

Carol. V. How vain must it be to pray, whilest men are devoted to vice?

When you make many prayers, I will hide mine eyes from you. — Your hands are full of blood, Isa. i. 15. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me, Psal. lxxviii. 18. The Lord is far from the wicked, but he beareth the prayer of the upright, Prov. xv. 28. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be abomination, Prov. xxviii. 9. The (most costly) sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight, Prov. xv. 8. Now we know that God beareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he beareth, John ix. 31^z.

Nay, persons guilty of notorious wickedness have been sometimes so struck with the prodigious

^z *Homer Il. a. l. 218.*

Ὅσας θεοῖς ἐπιπέθεται, μάλα τ' ἔκλυον αὐτῷ.

He who obeys the Gods, the Gods will hear.

“ The Athenians, in a war with the Lacedæmonians, having received many defeats both by sea and land, sent a message to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, to ask the reason why they, who had erected so many temples to the Gods, and decorated them in a most costly manner; who had instituted so many festivals with great pomp and ceremonies; who, in short, had slain so many hecatombs at their altars, were not so successful as the Lacedæmonians, who fell much short

“ of

prodigious greatnesse and horrible nature of their guilt, that they have not been able to pray, with any hopes of successe, or acceptance^a.

And

“ of them, in all these points of religion?” To this, the oracle replied, “ *I am better pleased with the prayer of the Lacedæmonians than with all the costly oblations of the Greeks.*” — “ The most vicious man might be devout, so far as victims could make him so. But his offerings would be regarded by the Gods, as bribes, and his petitions as blasphemies.”

Si Deus est animus, nobis ut carmina dicunt,
Hic tibi præcipue fit pura mente colendus.

Casta vult mente vocari,

Et Castas jussit pondus habere preces.

Cato.

Satis deum coluit, quisquis imitatus est; vis deum propitiari? bonus esto.

Seneca.

Casta placent superis, casta cum mente venite,
Et castis manibus sumite fontis aquam.

Tibull. L. II. Ep. I.

Nec segura quies illos, similisque sopori
Detinet. Inocui vivite, numen adest.

Reddite depositum, pietas sua fœdera firmet,
Fraus absit, vacuas cædis habete manus.

Ovid. i. de Arte amandi.

^a *Persons guilty of some notorious wickednesse, have been sometimes so struck with the prodigious greatnesse and horrible nature of their guilt, that they have not been able to pray with any hopes of successe, or acceptance.]*

Accordingly *Shakespear*, who is reckoned to have understood human nature as well as most men, has, more than once, represented persons, with the guilt of *mur-ther*

And, indeed, unlesse men desire to promote their repentance, increase their virtuous dispositions, and contract, or confirm an

ther upon their souls, as dying in the most black and dreadful despair, and utterly unable to pray.

Cardinal Beaufort had been concerned in the murder of good *Duke Humphry*. And, when he was on the verge of death, *King Henry the 6th* paid him a visit, and found him full of confusion and despair. And, though the King prayed for him, he could not pray for himself. *Peace to his soul* (saies the King) *if God's good pleasure be!*

*Lord Cardinal, if thou thinkest on heaven's blisse,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.*

He dies and makes no sign. *O God forgive him!*

When *Mackbeth* had just murdered *Duncan*, the King, he is introduced, as saying, concerning the two chamberlains, whom his Lady had made drunk on purpose,

Mack. "One cried *God bleſſe us!* And *Amen*, the other:

"As they had ſeen me with theſe hangman's hands.

"Liſtning their fear, I could not ſay *Amen*,

"When they did ſay, *God bleſſe us!*

Lady. "Conſider it not ſo deeply.

Mack. "But wherefore could I not pronounce *Amen?*

"I had moſt need of bleſſing; and *Amen*

"Stuck in my throat.

But the moſt noted paſſage of this kind is the ſoliloquy of the *King of Denmark*, that had murdered *Hamlet's* father, who was his own brother; and then married the queen, and taken poſſeſſion of the Kingdom.

"Oh, my offence is rank, it ſmells to heaven,

"It hath the primal, eldeſt curſe upon it;

"A brother's murder! PRAY? alas! I cannot,
"Tho'

an habit of piety and holiness, by their stated devotions, they had even as good never pretend to them.

But, if any person desires to cultivate a likeness to God, and a conformity to his will, he cannot take a more proper method than that of frequent, fervent *prayer*. And

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there

- “ Tho’ inclination be as sharp as it will,
 “ My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
 “ And, like a man to double business bound,
 “ I stand in pause, where I shall first begin,
 “ And both neglect. What! if this cursed hand
 “ Were thicker than itself with brother’s blood?
 “ Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
 “ To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy,
 “ But to confront the visage of offence?
 “ And what is in *prayer*, but this two-fold force,
 “ To be fore-stalled ere we come to fall,
 “ Or pardon’d, being down? Then *I’ll look up*.
 “ My fault is past. But oh, what *form of prayer*
 “ Can serve my turn? “ *Forgive me my foul mur-*
 “ *ther!*
 “ That cannot be, since I am still possess’d
 “ Of those effects, for which I did the murder,
 “ My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
 “ May one be pardon’d, and retain the offence?
 “ In the corrupted currents of this world,
 “ Offence’s gilded hand may shove by justice,
 “ And oft ’tis seen, the wicked prize itself
 “ Buys out the law. But ’tis not so above.
 “ There is no shuffling, there the action lies
 “ In *[its]* true nature: we ourselves compell’d,
 “ Even to the teeth and foreheads of our faults,
 “ To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
 “ Try what *repentance* can. What can it not?
 “ Yet what can aught, when one cannot repent?
 “ Oh wretched state! Oh bosom black as death!
 “ Oh limed soul, that struggling to be free,
 “ Art more ingaged!”

there is no man so likely to be heard and accepted, as he that has this praying frame and temper of spirit ^b.

In a word, if *prayer* makes us better men, it of course renders us more acceptable unto God. And answers to *prayer* are not to be looked upon, as extorted by importunity, or as the consequence of *much speaking*; but as the effects and instances of God's uniform and continued love to the pious and virtuous, which piety and virtue are wondrously promoted by daily *prayer*.

Such holy men, wanting a thorough knowledge of futurity, may ask for things improper; but such things the wise and good God in mercy denies them ^c.

And

^b *Immunis aram si tetigit manus,
Non sumptuosa blandior hostia,
Mollibit averfos penates,
Farre pio, & saliente mica.*

HOR. od. 23. l. 3.

*Quin damus id superis, de magna quod dare lance
Non possit magni Mesallæ lippa propago,
Compositum jus, fasque animi, sanctosque recessus
Mentis, & incoctum generoso pectus honesto,
Hæc cedo ut admoveam templis; & farre litabo.*

PERS. sat. 2.

^c *Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris;
Nam pro jucundis utilia quæque dabunt Dii:
Carior est illis homo quam sibi, &c.* JUVENAL. sat. 10.

We admire those sentiments in a few *heathen* writers, which lie open to every Christian. Behold the advantages of Christianity!

And *blessed are they that keep his commandments!* They have *infinite wisdom and goodness* to choose for them; *infinite power and unchangeableness* engaged for their welfare! In *prosperity and adversity*, they have a sure and *faithful friend!* In *sickness*, and at the *hour of death*, they know in whom they have *trusted*; and may enter upon another state undismayed, *commending their spirits* into his hands, in whose glorious presence they hope to spend the happy ages of eternity.

Let this encourage us to be frequently upon our knees, that we may keep up a continual sense of *God's* presence with us, and inspection over us. This will not suffer us to lie long in any sin, nor to be satisfied with low degrees of virtue, or holiness. This will keep us serious and sober-minded, and administer comfort to us, when our praying seasons, in this world, shall be no more.

I am, Dear SIR,

Your's, &c.



TRACT III.

A

P O S T S C R I P T

TO THE

L E T T E R

ON

P R A Y E R,

CONCERNING

The *views* which we ought to have in *praying*; — the drawing up *proper forms*; — the use of *scripture language*; — the confession of such sins only, as we are conscious we have been guilty of.



TRACT III.

A

OSTENSIBLY

TO THE

LETTER

ON

RAYB

CONCERNING

The same which we ought to have in regard to the drawing up of the form; — the use of the word "guilty" — the condition of fact, not only as we are conscious we have been guilty of.



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T O T H E
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P R A Y E R.



HERE are two observations of importance, which seem to arise out of this account of *the end and design of prayer.*

I. As *the principal thing in prayer is its practical tendency*, “ This may suggest some
“ useful directions concerning our views in
“ praying; and concerning the drawing up
“ of proper forms for our own use, or for the
“ use and assistance of others.”

All *general forms of prayer* ought to contain the principal branches of virtue and piety. And whoever prays, as the mouth of the people, should commonly go through the most essential duties of the christian life; that, by hearing such things frequently prayed over, and earnestly insisted upon, the people may be led more clearly to understand them, to remember them more distinctly, and to make conscience of living accordingly.

It is not only the frame of mind, in which any person may be, at the drawing up a form of prayer designed for general use, or when he speaks as the mouth of others in public worship; — but principally the common good of mankind, that ought to be consulted. For he, who consults that, brings most glory to *God*, most effectually advances the credit of virtue and true religion, and doeth most good to his fellow-creatures.

I would therefore, with great deference and submission, humbly propose, that all *forms*, designed for public use, whether in one, or many churches, be drawn up so as to take in as large a compasse of *christian duty* as possible, and be regulated all along with this *practical* view; — that such as use not any constant and set *forms*, would have a prevail-regard to that general, *practical* influence, which ought to be *the end and design of prayer*; — and that the stated prayers, both of the family,

family, and of the closet, be directed to this extensively beneficial and important end.

Such prayers, as are made for persons in particular circumstances, and upon peculiar occasions, are not to be supposed to take in so large a compass; but it ought to be remembered, that their chief view should be to influence to a right temper and behavior. For that seems to be the most likely method to receive benefit, and to have their particular requests granted, as far as they are rational, wise, and proper.

II. *As the principal thing in prayer is its practical tendency,* “By this we ought to regulate the language we make use of, as well as the thoughts and the method.”

Protestants clearly see the justness of this observation, when engaged in controversy with the church of *Rome*. *For, how absurd is it to pray in an unknown tongue?* But it has not been always attended to, that the same reasoning holds good, with respect to every phrase and expression, which has no fixed, or proper, meaning. For it is not enough that *God* understands what we would express; men must also understand, or else they cannot join in *the prayer*; nor can it have the right influence upon their temper, or conduct.

I should be unwilling to criticise, with rigor and severity, upon the *public forms* used by some; or upon the *public prayers* of others, who use no *stated forms*. But, whoever candidly

didly considers this matter, will find that the *language* of public prayers is not yet brought to its highest state of perfection; and I suppose the private devotions of most christians do not excel those of the public.

The *historical books of scripture*, in general, are remarkable for a simplicity of diction, as well of sentiments; but the poetical, and some of the prophetic, books do, more especially, abound with noble phrases and lofty figures, and have numberlesse instances both of the tender and pathetic, the magnificent and the sublime. — No stile, therefore, can be more proper, in our addresses to heaven, than that of *sacred writ*; provided it be made use of, with understanding.

But, how often has a regard to scripture-language led men, either to improper expressions, or mistaken sentiments? Dark and difficult passages have sometimes obtained the præference to those that are plane and easy; and such obscure texts have had a meaning put upon them, wholly foreign to their design: And that meaning, which phansy first stamped upon them, custom has so fixed, that the original sense of the words has been rejected, or never looked after.

Allusions are undoubtedly fine, when made with judgment, and considered only as allusions; — but, in proceſſe of time, how often has the allusive sense excluded the real and true

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true meaning? And the number of mistaken passages of scripture been thereby increased?

But the most fruitful source of mistakes, of this kind, hath been applying texts of scripture to our own case, which the sacred penmen made use of, in speaking of some peculiar cases, that were wholly different from ours. Even their language concerning *inspiration* and *miracles* hath been commonly applied to christians, in general, tho' the age of inspiration and miracles hath been past and over long ago.

I acknowledge that persons, who have been guilty of crying sins, and abominable vices, may (with great propriety) adapt many of the expressions, which, in the scriptures, are made use of, upon like occasions. But, (if the language, which was peculiar to inspired worship and miraculous operations, had not been so frequently used, concerning christians in common) — one might justly have wondered, why those, who have been free from scandalous vices, should nevertheless choose to confesse their sins, in the phrases, which, in *scripture*, are made use of, by such persons as had been guilty of *murther* and *adultery*; and, by the nation of *Israel*, after they had fallen into the abominations of idolatry, and the other shocking vices of some of their most abandoned neighbors!

Hath not this abuse of *scripture-language* led men to confesse sins, which they were
never

never guilty of? or to load their own crimes with aggravations, which did not belong to them? Has it not induced men to petition for mercies, which they have no reason to expect? and to bless God for favors, which they have never received? Doth it not evidently lead men to misinterpret the holy scriptures? and to apply texts to themselves, or to their neighbors, which were peculiar to persons in very different circumstances? — But I am unwilling to procede; because I choose not to say, how much error and superstition have been occasioned this way; and how exceedingly *christianity* has been hereby perverted from its original intention.

However; — You will observe, that it is only the abuse of scripture-language, which I am all along condemning. For, when allusions are introduced sparingly and with discretion; when persons, and manners, and circumstances are duely considered, and texts of scripture made use of, according to their original meaning; and, in that sense, are fairly and properly applicable to our case; — I think the *sacred dialect* is so far eligible, that *there is none like it*.

I would, therefore, propose that, in matters of dispute and difficulty, as well as in all points that are of a general nature, a departure from scripture-language, in our public worship, should be industriously avoided: Not only, as that is the language, in which
all

all parties can most heartily join; but, as different phrases gradually introduce different sentiments. And certainly, no words can expresse the mind of the spirit more justly, than those which he has seen fit to make use of. *Adieu.*



D

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TRACT. IV.

The THIRTIETH
DISSERTATION
OF

MAXIMUS TYRIUS,

Concerning this QUESTION,

“ Whether we ought to pray to
“ God, or no?”

Translated from the *Greek*.






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The THIRTIETH
DISSERTATION
OF
MAXIMUS TYRIUS.

S this dissertation is thought to contain some of the most subtile objections against *the reasonableness of praying*; I have taken the pains to translate it, and to add some *remarks* concerning the difficult, or exceptionable, passages; though I think, that, by the general solution *in the letter on prayer*, an attentive reader would be able to answer most of the objections.

However, the subject is of that importance, that one would not willingly leave any objection, or difficulty, without a careful and particular solution.

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THE
DISSERTATION.

A Certain *Phrygian*, of an idle disposition, and covetous, caught a satyr, a drunken dæmon, as the fable goes, by pouring wine into a fountain, at which the satyr used frequently to quench his thirst. The *foolish Phrygian* prayed his captive deity to grant him a request, which it was very much in character for him to ask, and the other to perform. His request was, "That the earth, and the trees, the standing corn, the meadows, and the flowers in the meadows, should be all turned into gold." The satyr granted him his request; but, when the land was turned into gold, it brought a famine among the *Phrygians*. Then *Midas* lamented over his riches, and retracted his prayer; no more applying to the satyr, but begging of the gods and goddesses, that they would restore to him his former plenteous and fruitful poverty, and turn the gold upon the heads of his enemies. These things he now prayed for, earnestly and with tears; but all in vain.

I can-

I cannot but applaud this fable, both for its wit and beauty; and for the truth, to which it directs us. For what does it intimate, but the prayer of a madman, who desires to have things which are evil, and begs that he may obtain his request; but, when he hath obtained it, repents and condemns it? By the captivity, the chains, and the wine of the satyr, the fable insinuates, that there are some who petition, and others who use violent methods, to obtain some particular thing; in which, if they succede, they will needs have it that the *gods* bestowed it upon them. But they ascribe it falsely to the gods. For from *God* procedes nothing but what is good: whereas the blind gifts of blind fortune are like the favors we receive from drunkards.

But what shall we say to the *Lydian king*? was not he mader than the *Phrygian*? when he prayed to *Apollo*, that he might have the kingdom of *Persia*, and sought the favor of the god, by making him a present of a large quantity of gold; treating him as the people do a magistrate, who loves to take bribes? And, having frequently received this answer from the oracle of *Apollo* at *Delphos*, "When *Cræsus* passes over the river *Halys*, he will overturn a large empire," he understood it according to his own inclinations; and passing over *Halys*, overthrew the large empire of the *Lydians*.

In *Homer* we find the *Greeks* praying thus^d,

*O thou, almighty father, guide the lot,
T' a worthy champion for the Grecian state!
This task let Ajax, or Tydides prove,
Or he, the king of kings, belov'd by Jove.*

Jupiter granted their request; and when

Old Nestor shook the cask, by heav'n inspir'd
Leap'd forth the lot, which every Greek desir'd,
And fell on Ajax. —————

But, though *Priam* interceded for his own native country, and daily sacrificed oxen and sheep to *Jupiter*, he would not answer his prayers^e.

On the other hand, to *Agamemnon*, who invaded another's dominions,

————— by partial Jove
*A safe return was promis'd to his toils,
Renown'd, triumphant, and enrich'd with
spoils,
From Ilium laid in ruins^f —————*

And *Apollo* would not revenge the injury of *Chryses*, 'till he freely told him of it, and put him in mind of the steam of the choice sacrifices,

^d Il. H. v. 179, &c.
follow this dissertation.

^e See the remarks which
Il. B. v. 111, &c.

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fices, which he had offered; and then, indeed, he directed his arrows against the *Græcian* army, not sparing even the mules; sheep and dogs; and that plague continued for nine days^g. What do you mean by these things, O prince of poets? Do you think that *the god* is a glutton, and a lover of bribes, and like the generality of mankind? And shall we take this as your true meaning,

*That the gods, —
Are mov'd by off'rings, pray'rs and sacrifice^h?*

Or, on the contrary, that the *deity* is inflexible, and neither performs the desires of men, nor is moved by their prayersⁱ? For to change his mind and repent, is so far from being worthy of *God*, that it is unworthy even of a good man. For a man, who easily alters his mind and repents, if he changes from the worse to the better, he had not sufficiently deliberated upon the matter; but, if he changes from the better to the worse, he makes a foolish and wicked change; — neither of which can be ascribed to *the deity*^k.

Now he, who prays, is either worthy to obtain what he prays for, or unworthy. If he is worthy, he shall obtain what he wants, tho' he doth not pray. If he is not worthy

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^g Il. A. v. 36, &c.

^h See Mr. Pope's translation.

ⁱ See the second remark.

^k See the third remark.

^h Il. I. v. 493. See Mr.

thy, he shall not obtain it, even tho' he prays. For he, that is worthy and omits to pray, is not therefore unworthy, because he prays not; neither is he, who is unworthy to receive a favor, and prays that he may obtain it, therefore worthy, because he prays. On the contrary, he, who is worthy to receive, and gives *God* no trouble [*by praying to him*] is so much the more worthy to have what he wants: Whereas he, who is unworthy, and likewise troublesome, is also, for that very reason, unworthy. To the one, we ascribe modesty, and a firm trust in the deity: — a *firm trust in the deity*, because he believes that he shall obtain what he desires; and *modesty*, because he acquiesces, tho' he doeth not obtain it. But to the other, folly and wickedness; — folly, because he prays to *God*; and wickedness, because he is unworthy to obtain his requests.

For, suppose *God* was the general of an army; and one, who is fit only to carry the baggage, should desire of the general the place of one who bears arms; and another, who is fit to bear arms, should be silent; would it not be to the advantage of the army, to leave the former with the baggage, and rank the latter among those who bear arms? And yet the general of an army may be ignorant, corrupted with bribes, or deceived; but none of these can happen to the deity. Wherefore he will not bestow any thing upon them that pray, if they are unworthy; neither will
he

he withhold any thing from the worthy, even though they should not pray. For¹ as to all things men pray for, some of them *providence* inspects, others *fate* renders necessary, some *fortune* changes, and others *art* manages. As to *providence*, it is the work of *God*, *fate* is the effect of necessity, *art* is the work of man, and *fortune* the effect of chance. And human life is subject to all these. The things, therefore, which we pray for, may be referred either to the *providence of God*, or to the necessity of *fate*, or to the *art* of man, or to the course of *fortune*.

If they be referred to *providence*, what occasion is there for *prayer*? For, if there be a *divine providence*, either *God* regards the whole, and attends not to particular things (just as kings govern cities, but extend not their care to every individual man) or his *providence* respects particular things. Now choose which of these you please. Would you have it that the *providence of God* regards the whole, in general? You are, therefore, not to trouble him with your *prayers*; for he will not grant your requests, if you ask any thing which is inconsistent with the good of the whole. What, suppose the members of the body should assume a voice, and every one of them, when affected with a disease, and going to be cut off by the physician, for the preservation

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of

¹ See the fourth remark.

of the whole, should beg of him, that he would spare it; would not the physician answer, "It is not reasonable, that for your sake, ye poor wretches, the whole body should perish; but you must perish to preserve that." — And this is what is done in the universe. The *Athenians* suffer a plague, the *Lacedæmonians* an earthquake; the *Theſſalians* an inundation, and mount *Etna* consumes with flames.

You call the destruction of these a corruption;^m but the physician understands the reason of these things, and regards not the particular members, when they pray, but preserves the whole; this is his care.

But, suppose *God* regards particular things, even then we ought not to prayⁿ. For that would be the same thing^o as for a sick person to ask for medicines, or proper food, from his physician. For, if it be right, he will give it to him, though he do not ask for it; if it be wrong, he will not give it, though he desire it. Therefore none of these things, which are done by *providence*, ought to be petitioned, or prayed for.

But what shall we say to those things which procede from *fate*? Why, here also prayer would be ridiculous; for you may more easily persuade a king than a tyrant. Now *fate* is like a tyrant, and both ungovernable and in-

^m See the fifth remark.

^o See the seventh remark.

ⁿ See the sixth remark.

inflexible. It, as it were, puts a bridle on the human herd, with which it violently drags them along, and forces them to obey. Just as the tyrant *Dionysius* did the *Siracusians*, *Pisistratus* the *Athenians*, *Periander* the *Corinthians*, and *Thraſybulus* the *Miletians*. For, in popular states, persuasion and prayer, compliance and intreaty may do something; but, under tyranny, force over-rules all, as it does in war.

*Preserve my life, Atrides, king of kings,
And in reward you'll have the richest things².*

[Thus prayed *Adrastus*, but prayed in vain.]

What rewards then shall we give to fate, that we may be loosed from its necessity and chain? what gold? what obedience? what victims? what prayers? Seeing *Jupiter* himself has not found out any way to avert it; but thus laments,

*Alas, Sarpedon! cruel fate ordains
That godlike son of mine should presse the planes.
Already on the verge of death he stands,
His life is ow'd to great Patroclus' hands³.*

To which of the gods doeth *Jupiter* pour out his prayer for his son?

And

² Il. z. v. 46.

³ Il. T. ver. 433, &c.

And *Thetis* likewise thus cries out,
Hear me and judge, ye sisters of the main!
How just a cause has Thetis to complain?
That her brave son is doom'd to so much sorrow!

Such are the *destinies*, *Atropos*, *Clotbo* and *Lachesis*. Such is *fate*, immutable, firmly fixed, and that which determines the lives of men. Why, then, should any one pray to *fate*, which is inexorable?

But neither are we to pray for the things which procede from *fortune*. And in this, indeed, much lesse than in the other cases. For there is no treating with a mad ruler, where neither counsel, nor judgment, nor prudence holds the reins of government; but all is subject to fury, blind impulse, mad freaks, and successive passions. Such is *fortune*; unreasonable, mad, imprudent, deaf, unaccountable, which ebbs and flows like the *Euripus*, is tossed about, and under no direction of a pilot. Why, therefore, should any one pray to a thing so fickle and foolish, so unequal and unfociable?

Lastly, next to *fortune*, let us consider *art*. What carpenter would pray for a good plough, when he hath the *art* to make it himself? What weaver will pray for a handfom garment,

ment, when he has the *art* to make one? What smith will pray for a beautiful shield, when he has the *art* to make one himself? What brave man will pray for presence of mind, when he has valor already? Or what good man will pray for happiness, when he is already possessed of virtue?

For what, therefore, can any one pray to *God*, which belongs not to *providence*, *fate*, *art*, or *fortune*? Do you ask for riches? Do not trouble the *Gods*; you do not pray for what is good. Do not trouble *fate*; you ask for nothing necessary. Do not trouble *fortune*; she doeth not bestow any thing upon the needy. Do not tire *art* with your importunities. For you find *Menander* saying, "The arts will not grow old, unless they have a covetous master." And is not the thing really so?

Are you now a good man? Change your manner of life, cheat and defraud, pursue your interest, and get money by turning pander, or huckster, by robing, tricking, perjury, sycophantry, or bribery. Do you desire victory? If in war, hire soldiers; if in a court of judicature, suborn witnesses. Do you desire to get by traffick? Ships, the sea, and favorable winds, procure this. The market is open, and what you want may be purchased. Why do you disturb the *gods*? Be not afraid to venture upon any thing that is vile

† See the eighth remark.

vile and wicked ; and you may grow rich, though you were *Hipponicus* ; conquer, though you were *Cleon* ; obtain your wish, though you were *Melitus*.

But, if you apply with your *prayers* to the gods, you go to a tribunal which is severe and inexorable. For † there is no god will indure one who prays for things which are not to be desired ; nor grant you things improper to be granted. The deity narrowly inquires into, and rigidly examines, the *prayers* of every man ; directing and overuling all things according to what is most expedient ; not giving way to the desires of men, as is often done in human judicatories ; — though they lament, earnestly implore help, and scatter much dust upon their heads ; nay, though they upbraid the deity, as *Chryses* upbraided *Apollo*,

*If e'er with wreaths I hung thy sacred fane,
Or bulls and goats on flaming altars laid.
Apollo, bear my prayer* ^u ! —

But the deity sais, “ If you seek for good things, with a good design, and are yourself good, or worthy of the things you desire, you shall receive them : ” But, if you seek for such things, you have no occasion to pray. For you shall receive them, even though you hold your peace.

But

† See the ninth remark. ^u H. A. v. 38.

But you will say, that “ *Socrates* went
“ into the *Pyræum*, to pray to the godeſſe;
“ and he adviſed others to do ſo. Nay,
“ that the life of *Socrates* was as it were
“ one continued prayer. *Pythagoras* alſo
“ prayed, and *Plato*, and every one beſides,
“ that was willing to pay homage to the
“ gods.”

But do you think that the prayer of a *philosopher* is deſiring thoſe things which he hath not *? I look upon it as nothing elſe but a converſation and diſcourſe with the *gods*, concerning what he already poſſeſſes, and as a teſtimony of his virtue. Or, do you ſuppoſe that *Socrates* prayed for riches, or that he might be advanced to the government of *Athens*? By no means. No, he prayed to the *gods* for virtue of mind, peace, and tranquillity of life, blameleſſe manners, a death full of the hopes of immortality; but, with their permiſſion, took them from himſelf; — All admirable gifts, and ſuch as the *gods* beſtow.

* But, ſhould any one aſk for a prosperous voyage by land, or plentiful crop at ſea; a plough of a weaver; or a cloak of a carpenter; he would go away unanſwered, empty, and diſappointed.

“ O *Jupiter*, *Minerva*, and *Apollo*!
“ watchful inſpectors of the manners of men;
“ You

* See the tenth remark.

x See the eleventh re-

mark. y See the twelfth remark.

110 *A Dissertation of Maximus Tyrius*

“ you ought to have none but *philosophers* for
“ your disciples, such as can receive your in-
“ struction into their great souls; and, in
“ their lives, yield a beautiful and plenteous
“ harvest!”

But this sort of agriculture is very rare, and doeth not yield its produce, but with difficulty, and late in life; and then it shows itself, after different manners, in different persons. But, in human life, there is need of this rare and small spark; as, in a dark night, there is occasion for a small light. For that, which is excellent in human nature, lies in a narrow compasse; and yet, by this small matter, the whole is preserved. But, if you take *philosophy* from human life, you take away that, which animates, inspires, and preserves it; that, which alone can direct you how to *pray*; just as, if you take away the soul from the body, you destroy the body; or the sun from the day, you destroy the day.

The end of the dissertation.

TRACT.



TRACT. V.

REMARKS

On the foregoing

DISSERTATION

OF

MAXIMUS TYRIUS.



1820

TRACT V

REMARKS

On the

DISSENTION

OF

MAXIMUS TYRUS

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M A X I M U S T Y R I U S.

- I.  *UT, tho' Priam interceded for his own native country, and daily sacrificed oxen and sheep to Jupiter, he would not answer his prayers. On the other hand, to Agamemnon, who invaded another's dominions, &c.]*

This is an antient and very common objection against a *particular providence*, viz.
“ that the just and pious are often miserable ;
“ while the impious, or unjust, flourish in
“ prosperity.”

Whereas this objection will intirely vanish, if this life be a state of trial, in which the

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faculties

faculties of men are to be exercised, and their virtues tried, increased, and put to the proof, in order to prepare them for a state of recompence. For, in a state of trial, there must be *trials*, i. e. there must be prosperity and adversity, opportunities, temptations, and difficulties; otherwise, how shall mens faculties be exercised, or their virtue increased and put to the proof? The very nature of such a state supposes various difficulties and hard trials; that they, who behave best here, may be the most happy hereafter.

————— *Know that virtue soars above
What the world calls misfortune and affliction.
These are not ills; else would they never fall
On heaven's first favorites, and the best of men.
Our God, in bounty, works up storms about us,
That give mankind occasion to exert
Their hidden strength, and throw out into practice
Virtues, which shun the day, and lie conceal'd
In the smooth seasons and the calms of life.*

ADDISON.

However, I am fully satisfied, that, even in this life, the virtuous are not so greatly, nor so often, miserable; nor the vicious so commonly successful, and in so high a degree happy; as men, who judge by external appearance, are apt to imagine. For we are incapable, in many cases, of judging concerning the virtue or vice, the happiness or the misery of

of other men. The truest virtue and piety lie most in shade and privacy ; and vice wants a shelter, and most commonly seeks one. So, likewise, happiness and misery lie very much out of view ; and two men, in the same outward circumstances, may be one of them very happy, and the other very miserable.

But, suppose men were commonly happy, or miserable, just as the world, which sees only their outward circumstances, judges of them ; and that some good men are greatly afflicted, while other bad men triumph in their wickedness ; all, that can fairly be concluded from this, is, that the *plan of providence* reaches into another world, and is not terminated within the narrow bounds of this present, transitory life.

II. *To change his mind and repent, is so far from being worthy of God, that it is unworthy of a good man, &c.]*

“ That it is unworthy of *God* to repent,” is a very just observation. He cannot change for the better, and he will not change for the worse. There is an eternal, unalterable difference between good and evil, as much as between light and darkness ; evil is, at all times, and in all places, deformed and unreasonable, and good is always and everywhere amiable and wise ; neither can they, by any art, any will, or any power whatever, become otherwise. Now what good

and evil are in themselves, such they always appear to the divine understanding; *that is*, the one always wise and right, and the other foolish and wrong. The power of *God* is such, that he is under no controul from any being whatever; neither has he any thing to hope for, or to fear. — What motive, therefore, can he, possibly, have to refuse what is most amiable and wise, just and good; or to choose what is odious and detestable, deformed and base? Such a being can have no temptation to bias him from following the dictates of his own perfect understanding. And he, who never chooses wrong, can never have occasion to repent, or change his mind.

But this cannot justly be said of the most virtuous man, whose understanding is finite, and who is surrounded with many and strong temptations to evil.

Maximus Tyrius himself doeth elsewhere, with great justnesse, make this inquiry, “What man is so good, as to passe through “life without a fault”?” And, if the best of men offend, certainly it is not unworthy of the best of men so far to repent and alter their conduct.

III. Now *he*, who prays, is either worthy to obtain what he prays for, or unworthy; if he is

² τίς αὐτὸς ἔτις ἀγαθός, ὡς διελεῖν βίον ἀνίσταται.
Dissert. 26.

worthy, he shall obtain what he wants, though he doth not pray, if he is not worthy, &c.]

This is one of the objections against *praying*, on which this *philosopher* has laid the greatest stress; but, when it is examined, it will be found to have no weight in it.

It is readily acknowledged, that he, who continues wicked, cannot reasonably hope to obtain his request, though he should *pray*; because his vices render him unworthy. But the other assertion [*viz.* “ that the virtuous, “ or worthy man, *as he calls him*, shall obtain what he wants, though he doeth not “ *pray*; nay, that he shall sooner obtain it, “ because he doeth not *pray*,”] proceeds upon two suppositions, which are both of them groundlesse and false. The one is, that such as *pray*, are troublesome to the *deity*; and the other is, that a man may be as virtuous and worthy, without *prayer*, as with it. Whereas,

1. “ He, who *prays*, cannot be troublesome to the divine being, let him pray never so often, and never so importunately.”

What notions must they have had of *God*, to think that such persons, as constantly worship him, and intensely pray unto him, can be troublesome to him? His ears are ever open, and his eyes are always upon the children of men. He is infinitely perfect, and infinitely happy, and therefore cannot be disturbed, or made uneasy, by the most frequent and earnest addresses of the whole rational creation, sup-

pose they should addresse him all at once. Before the world was, the *deity* was perfect and happy; and, if the whole creation was annihilated all together, he could suffer nothing by it. The existence and thoughts, the speeches and actions, of the creatures, can make no alteration in the divine perfection, nor interrupt his happiness.

2. "A man cannot be as virtuous, and as acceptable to *God*, without *prayer*, as with it." Had *Maximus Tyrius* attended to it, that *prayer* is a part of *natural religion*, and one of the best means for promoting *virtue*; he, surely, would not have made this objection. For consider *prayer* in this view, and then no man can, with any reason, hope to obtain any favor, though he neglects to *pray*; much less that he shall the sooner succeed, without *prayer*, than with it. He insinuates, that the abstaining from *prayer*, is a sign of *modesty* and *wisdom*. But what want of modesty doeth it argue for a man daily to meditate on the highest moral character, the great pattern and standard of virtue and all perfection? What folly! daily to prostrate ourselves before him? to acknowledge our dependence upon him? and the strong and numberless obligations, we are under, to submission, virtue, and a regular obedience?

Repeted meditations upon such important subjects, under an actual sense of the presence and inspection of *God*, must be one of the

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the noblest means of *virtue*. — To make use of the best means to promote *virtue*, is in itself a *virtue*; and he, who is most virtuous, is the most beloved by the *Deity*, and may reasonably expect the greatest favor; — if not in this present world; yet in the future state of recompence.

This, however, ought carefully to be attended to, that a man, continuing in vice, cannot, with any reason, hope that his *prayers* will have any influence upon the *Deity*, as long as they have none upon his own mind and manners.

IV. *As to all the things men pray for, some of them providence inspects; others fate renders necessary; some fortune changes; and others art manages, &c.]*

As to *fate* and *fortune*, they are in reality nothing; that is, no real beings, or superintending powers. For suppose, by *fate*, we understand the orderly and regular course of things: — That is nothing but what *God* has settled in *creation*, and continues by his *providence*. It is not like the *fate* of the *Greeks*, to which *Jupiter* himself, the supreme *God*, was subject, and which he could not alter. Such a *fate*, as they imagined, has no existence; and, therefore, nothing ought to be ascribed to it. As to *fortune*; if, by that, we mean success, or an enjoyment of the blessings of this life; that flows from the divine benignity, and not from any such blind,

or capricious, principle ; as they have represented *fortune* to be. And, as to *chance*, the parent of *fortune*, it either stands for a mere idea, or it is a word without any meaning. If it be used for any thing's happening without a cause, it is an idle and groundlesse notion, or a word without any meaning. For nothing (no effect whatsoever) happens, or can happen, without a proper and adequate cause. But if, by *chance*, we mean that something comes to passe, the cause of which we are ignorant of, or that it is to us an unexpected and unforeseen event, then *chance* stands for a mere idea, and is used (not to intimate that the thing had no cause, but) merely to expresse our ignorance and surprize. It is not any real being, agent, or superintending principle ; and therefore no more ought to be ascribed to it than to *fate* ; nor has human life any concern with either of them.

As to the other two [viz. *the providence of God*, and the *art and industry of man*] they are to be joined together, and ought never to be separated ; *that is*, we are to use our understandings and best indeavors for the acquiring what we want, and look up to the *providence of God* for succeſſe and a blessing. For “ whatever advantages I obtain by my
 “ own free indeavors, and right use of thoſe
 “ powers and faculties I have, I look upon
 “ them to be as much the effects of *God's providence and government*, as if they were given
 “ me

“ me immediately by him, without my acting; *as he is the author of my being*; and all my powers and faculties (whatever they are) depend upon him, and are as it were instruments of his providence to me, in respect of such things as may be procured by them^a. And, therefore, the *art of man* ought by no means to exclude the *providence of God*; much less ought we to *pray to art*, as if it were some intelligent principle, or superintending power.

V. *But the physician understands the reason of these things, and regards not the particular members, when they pray, but preserves the whole. This is his care.*]

What he has said above, when he compares *God* to the general of an army, who will not place any man in an improper station; and what he says here, when he compares him to a wise physician, who takes care of *the whole*, though to the destruction of some of the lesser parts; — is very fine, and exceeding just; but no argument at all against *prayer*. For we ought always to *pray* with submission to the wisdom of the *Deity*; and for success, only as far as it is consistent with the good of the whole. But surely, it will be most for the good of the *whole* rational creation, that the virtuous should be finally happy: and *prayer* is a noble mean to promote *virtue*,
and

^a Mr. Woollaston's *Religion of nature delineated*, &c.

and consequently to prepare men for the highest and most perfect happiness.

VI. *But, suppose God regards particular things; even then we ought not to pray.]*

This philosopher seems to have been dubious about a *particular providence*; but can there be a *general providence*, without regarding particular things? Is not the whole made up of the several parts? And how can he regard the *whole*, who attends not to *particulars*? Besides, upon little and seemingly inconsiderable things, some of the greatest events depend. And, therefore, to assert that the *providence* of God is not extended to particular things, is in effect to take the government of the world out of his hands. However, whether a *general*, or a *particular providence* be maintained, *Providence* is an argument for *praying*, not against it. For, "in many cases, the order of events, proceeding from the settlement of nature, may be as compatible with the due and reasonable success of my endeavors and *prayers* (as inconsiderable a part of the world as I am) as with any other thing, or *phænomenon*, how great soever." In other cases, interpositions may be supposed, though I think the plan of *providence* requires them very seldom. But where neither of these will exactly suite the particular cases of virtuous, or vicious men, it ought to lead us to a view of our
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future existence, to which the plan of providence doeth most evidently extend.

VII. *That would be the same thing, as for a sick person to ask for medicines, or proper food from his physician, &c.]*

As to the argument against *prayer*, which he would here draw from a physician's granting medicines, and proper food, to his patient, without his asking for them; — it is not, in the least, any objection against the reasonableness and propriety of *praying to God*; because the comparison doeth not come up to the case in hand. For, when we send for a *physician*, it is supposed that he will take care to restore our health, without our asking him for proper diet, or *physic*. And *Maximus Tyrius* does here take it for granted, that our health would not be promoted by such a particular request. But to apply to the highest and most virtuous being, for what we want; and to expect favor from him, according as we excel in *virtue*, tends greatly to promote our virtue. And consequently this comparison fails in the main point.

VIII. *Are you now a good man? Change your manner of life, cheat and defraud; pursue your interest, and get money, by turning pander, &c.]*

I do not think that the methods, he here prescribes, are such sure ways of acquiring riches, as he seems to have thought them. However, he hath, with great humor and
justness,

justnesse, lashed the vile and wicked methods, which many take to obtain the possessions of this transitory, uncertain life.

IX. *There is no God will indure one, who prays for things, which are not to be desired, nor grant you things improper to be granted, &c.]*

All this is just concerning the *true God*, though not concerning their fictitious *Jupiter, Apollo, &c.* But what objection is this against *praying*, for things that are proper, and may reasonably be desired? One great end of *prayer* is to bring our minds to a *submissive temper*, to restrain such desires as are unreasonable, and to inable us to acquiesce in the circumstances, which *providence* allots us.

X. *I look upon it [that is, the prayer of a philosopher] as nothing else but a conversation and discourse with the gods, concerning what be already possesses, and as a testimony of his virtue, &c.]*

Surely, it would not have been unbecoming the wisdom of *Socrates* (who is acknowledged to have been an extraordinary man, and to have died a *martyr* for virtue) to have petitioned for future blessings, as well as thankfully acknowledged the present, or submissively acquiesced. And I am apt to think that *Socrates* really did so.

Instead of calling *prayer* "a testimony of virtue", I should rather have called it an *act of virtue*; as it is an help to virtue, and one

one of the noblest and best means to promote it.

XI. *But suppose any one should ask for a prosperous voyage by land, or plentiful crop at sea, &c.]*

Such absurd things ought never to be the subjects of our *prayers*. Nay, when we pray for such temporal things, as are in themselves reasonable and wise, we should always desire them, only upon the supposition that they are consistent with *the good of the whole*; and, at the same time, wise and proper for us.

XII. *Ob Jupiter, Minerva, and Apollo! watchful inspectors of the manners of men, &c.]*

What pity is it that a man of *Maximus Tyrius's* good sense (who lived some time after the first planting of the *gospel*) had not inquired into, and imbraced, the *christian religion*; which would have shown him the folly of invoking *Jupiter, Minerva, and Apollo*; and taught him, in the most clear manner, *the end and design*, and consequently, the *reasonableness of prayer*?

Every *christian* would be such, as he represents his *philosophers*, if they lived up to the rules of their most excellent religion. And then they would, all of them, be proper disciples to a *Deity*, much superior to all those *many Gods*, which *Maximus Tyrius* and other *heathen authors* have mentioned in their writings.

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When a man of such acutenesse, as this *philosopher* appears to have been, could not, with all his sagacity, disintangle himself from *polytheism* and *idolatry*; nor find any sufficient reason, why men, in general, should address the *Deity* by *prayer*; — how ought our hearts to glow with gratitude to *Almighty God*; who, by the *christian revelation*, has dispelled that thick darknesse; and set the noblest and most important truths in the fullest and clearest light?

The end of the remarks on the dissertation.



TRACT.

TRACT. VI.
THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PREDESTINATION
REVIEWED:
OR

The NATURE of the COUNCILS and DECREES
of GOD, and the rise and occasion of the
scripture-language concerning them.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.



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THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PRÆDESTINATION
REVIEWED, &c.

Dear SIR,



S the doctrine of *prædestination* is frequently referred to, in the sacred writings of the *New Testament*; and so much of the solution in my former letter, [concerning the reasonableness of praying to an infinitely wise, powerful, and good God,] depends upon the nature of the *divine foreknowledge and prædetermination*; — it may not be amiss to proceed, and communicate to you my thoughts concerning this other subject; that I may, at least, testify how willing I am to oblige you.

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I readily acknowledge (with you) that the subject is in itself difficult, and subtle enough; though I still think, that it has been rendered much more so, by *voluminous wrangling*.

And, I need not hint the necessity of a closer attention, to one that reads with your care and exactness.

I refer you to other authors, for the two different schemes, and the arguments *pro*—and *con*—What I propose, is to adhere to *the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus*, or in his doctrine, as it is left upon record in the *New Testament*. Nor is the subject of small moment, if we recollect what *scruples* it has raised in the breasts of the pious (especially those of a melancholy disposition) who have been afraid of their everlasting concerns; as if, after all their best endeavors to be virtuous and holy, and to persevere therein, they might yet, possibly, be found (not *the vessels of mercy*, but) *vessels of wrath, appointed to destruction*. — And, on the other hand, what *præsumption* it has occasioned, even in some of the most abandoned of men, who have imagined that, possibly, they may belong to *the election of grace*, though they have gone on to live the lives of *reprobates*.

Beverovicius, a learned physician, wanted to be satisfied, “ whether the end of men’s “ lives was unalterably fixed and determined? ” before he would pretend to practise the art of physic.

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I myself wanted to be satisfied, upon a twofold account, "whether the actions of men, and their final state, were unalterably fixed, and absolutely and unconditionally decreed? or only conditionally? Or, whether the *texts* in holy scripture, that speak of this subject, are to be understood literally, or figuratively?"

First, That I might endeavor to regulate my own actions, if free, and might prepare for a future state of happiness, if decreed only conditionally. Or, if otherwise; that I might acquiesce, as much as possible, in what was not to be resisted, or avoided. And,

Secondly, As I was in prospect of undertaking *the care of souls*, I wanted to know, "whether it would be to any purpose?" As concluding that it could answer no end, to persuade such as have no power, nor could do any thing but what they did, as chained down to one course of action, by an irreversible decree; in which case, arguments and motives, promises and threatnings, reproofs and exhortations, could avail nothing. But, if it appeared that men have some power given them in creation; that they may reasonably expect all proper, divine assistance; and that their final and everlasting state is decreed only *conditionally*; I might set myself to the sacred work of the ministry, in hopes of succeeding in some measure, and doing at least some good.

Considering it in these views, I could not look upon it as a matter of *mere speculation*, or as a subject for men to display their talents, or exercise their wits, about; but as a point of very great moment, and which lies at the foundation of all *practical religion*. For which ever side is found to be true, it draws after it numberless consequences: — The two schemes being as different as light and darknesse, and as distant from one another, as the east is from the west.

Some studious and well-disposed men (in their unguarded zeal) have sought to recommend the sacred scriptures, by pretending that they contain every thing. Whereas, their plane design is to instruct men only in *religion*.

To search, therefore, for all *arts and sciences* in the *Bible*, would be just as wise as to seek *the laws of England in the Grammar*, or *a system of natural philosophy in the Statute-book*. The scripture (like other authors) should be read with that view with which it was written.

To the poor the gospel was preached; and for them its language is calculated; and therefore, it speaks after a popular, familiar way. Studious persons may look beyond common appearances, and may have both pleasure and advantage from their researches. But *day-laborers* must take their notions from common appearances; and that will answer well enough

enough the common purposes of life, and be ground sufficient for the *essentials* of godliness.

Had it only been remembred, that God adapts his thoughts and expressions to the capacities of them, to whom he speaks (as all wise men endeavor to do) the flouts of some gay and fashionable writers, upon the stile and manner of the sacred oracles, would appear groundlesse, and the sallies of a false wit, which wants the foundation of truth and knowlege.

The principal design of the *christian revelation*, was not to make men *philosophers*, *orators*, or *critics*; but (which is of vastly more moment) *to make men good*; to instruct an ignorant, and reform a vitious world; to teach persons of lower (as well as of higher) capacities the way to true happiness. Its plainness and simplicity may make it despised by those *wise* and prudent heads, who *are puffed up with knowlege, falsely so called*; whilst the discovery appears noble, and is grateful to *babes*; *i. e.* to persons meek, and teachable enough to be instructed in God's own way.

The insinuation of a parable, the easy and pleasant instruction of an history (with all the moving, artlesse methods, wherewith holy writ captivates the well-disposed) strike the minds of men deeper, and more agreeably than the *dry rules* and *hard terms of a system*.

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This general hint of the plainness of *sacred scripture*, and of the end, for which it was given us, might help to clear up numberless other points, which are at present perplexed.

But what I would now principally apply it to, is the *doctrine of the divine fore-knowledge and decrees*.

And, in order thereto, let us see how it holds in other cases.

The great God himself, his nature, perfections, and operations, are thus popularly described; and so are also spiritual and everlasting things. And thus, indeed, they must be described to us, or not at all. Were invisible things called by proper names of their own, and described, without comparing them to something already known, we could not have any notion of them. But God has given us the best notions, we can have, by condescending to compare them to things seen and known. Thus *heaven* is compared to an *inheritance*, to *riches*, to a *city* or *country*, to a *church* or *temple*, to a *crown* and *kingdom*, to a *garden*, to a *banquet*, and to many like things, well known, and highly esteemed upon earth.

The *miseries* of *bad men* in the *future state*, are compared to the *pain*, caused by *fire* and *brimstone*; and by a *worm* (or *serpent*) perpetually preying upon a *man's* *vitals*, to a *being imprisoned in a dungeon*, and to the *horrors of death*;

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death; i. e. it is compared to the most dreadful things, we now know, or can imagine.

All which descriptions are not to be taken in the *literal sense*; but only, as intimating the *superlative* happiness of the one state, and misery of the other.

Thus also *God* (though he is *a spirit*) has represented himself, *in holy writ*, as if he had *a body*, in *analogy* to the parts and powers of human bodies; yet our most noble and just ideas of *God* arise from comparing him to our own *souls*, or *spirits*. And thus the *holy scripture* compares him, when it tells us, that backsliders *his soul* hates^b. And not only *a soul* in general, but also the passions of the human soul are ascribed to *God*, *viz. anger, vengeance, fear, hope, grief, sorrow, love, pity*, and the like. All which are not to be understood literally, but figuratively. Thus, for instance, *God* can do all things, that man can do, by any, or all the parts and members of the body; can see as well as if he had eyes, hear as well as if he had ears, act as well as if he had hands, understand as well as if he had an head, or heart, &c.

And, again, he will inflict punishment upon the wicked and finally impenitent (from cool reason and unerring judgment) as certainly, as if he was roused with *fear, anger*, or *revenge*: And will make happy all the truly virtuous and holy, as if he was most sensibly

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^b Heb. x. 38.

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touched with *hope*, or *pity*; and his own happiness, in some measure, depended upon theirs. He will alter his treatment of such as backslide, as really as if he had *repented* of the favor shown them. And so will he act, on the contrary, towards a returning prodigal, as *repenting* of his threatnings.

Thus, the outward actions of God and man are, in some things, alike; but the inward principles widely differ. *Infinite reason*, and *unerring wisdom*, always determine God; *humor*, *sicklenesse* and *passion*, too often influence man. When a man *repents*, he actually changes his mind. When God is said to *repent*, there is no change of his mind; the change is in the creature, who, upon becoming better, is approved; upon growing worse, is disapproved^c. For God stedily favors *goodnesse*, and as fixedly dislikes *wickednesse*. Upon these accounts, *repentance* and *human passions* are ascribed unto God.

The same comparison is carried on, between God and the *human soul*, when God is represented as considering before-hand; *consulting*; and, after that, *resolving*, or *decreeing*.

The foundation whereof is this: When a Man has a work of time and importance before him, he *pauses*, *consults*, and *contrives*; and, when he has laid a plan, *resolves*, or *decrees* to procede accordingly. When we have
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^c See the observations of *Simplicius*, in the note on the *Letter on prayer*, p. 75.

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found this in *ourselves*, we are ready to apply it to *God* also ; and he, in condescension, has applied it to *himself*.

The works of *creation* and *providence*, must be allowed to be *vast* and *stupendous*; and, therefore, we run back, and conceive of *God*, as a skilful artificer, or wise governor, *deliberating* and *consulting* upon the matter; as laying a plan, and then *decreeing* to procede *according to the counsels of his own will*. As if, for a long time before this world was made, or from all eternity, he had been concerting measures, both as to the making and governing of it, and then writ down his *decrees*, which (*like the laws of the Medes and Persians*) were never to be altered. Whereas, to take this [*of God's consulting, and deliberating, before he determined,*] in a strict and literal sense, would be the same absurdity, as to ascribe a real human body, and real human passions to the *ever-blessed God*.

It is only in general, a popular representation of his infallible *fore-knowledge*, and unchangeable *wisdom*: i. e. he, in the event, does all things as wisely as a man can possibly do, after *consulting*, and *surveying* a thing on all sides; and likewise, *God* as stedily pursues the most proper method, as one can do, that has foreseen all possible cases, and laid a *scheme* accordingly. There can nothing *new*, or *unforeseen*, start up, and surprize him, so as to put him to any difficulty. He foresees
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all possible events, *knows the end from the beginning; and, from antient times, the things that have, or shall come to passe.* And, in one word, *all God's conduct is as wise and rational,* as if he had the best *laws and decrees,* and governed himself by them. But then; though the effects be such, as would argue *consultations,* and consequent *decrees,* in *man;* the principles of action widely differ. What need of one moment's consultation in him, who sees all things at one view? what need has *infinite perfection* of the helps necessary to finite and imperfect creatures?

Previous *consultations,* and subsequent *resolutions,* are only needed, where the ideas are short, finite, and successive; — defects, or imperfections, by no means to be ascribed unto *the all-perfect deity!*

But, though such *decrees,* as are the result of consultation, or that are looked upon like written laws, to keep by one and to consult, as occasion serves; — though such *decrees,* I say, cannot justly be ascribed to God: Yet, that the divine understanding should immediately, perfectly, and in all cases, discern between good and evil; and that the divine will should thereupon determine to choose the one, and refuse the other; — seems intirely consistent with highest perfection, and with our most just and worthy conceptions of the ever-blessed God. Nay, for the divine Being to remain one moment undetermined, concerning

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cerning the choice of what is *good*, or the refusal of *evil*, — would argue some imperfection in him, and be inconsistent with our highest, most just, and most exalted notions of him.

However, it is evident, that, in the popular language of scripture, previous *counsels* and subsequent *decrees* are ascribed to the divine being; — to point out to us the wisdom, and the stediness of his conduct.

The three great effects of divine wisdom and power, are *creation*, *providence*, and *redemption*. The *universe* has been created, in all that order and exact harmony; with all that fitness, relation, and mutual dependence, that it could not have carried more marks of wisdom, if the plan had been ever so long in hand, and the whole, and each part, modelled with ages of previous study; and then, the great *architect* had set about the mighty work, and adjusted it, in *number*, *weight*, and *measure*, according to the *decrees*, or proper *rules of creation*.

Though we comprehend not the intire *system of providence* (which is of a large extent, and calculated for many ages) yet we may observe, that the *material world* is under a very remarkable *regulation*.

And much more must we suppose it of *intelligent beings*, which are superior in rank and dignity. Our not being able to account for some particulars, should (in *modesty* and *justice*)
be

be imputed to *our* ignorance, rather than to the want of wisdom, and propriety in *them*.

For no man can say, that any thing is improper, which does not planely appear to imply some absurdity, or contradiction; unless he could enter into the whole scheme, and knew all the ends and designs of each particular.

What has been said of *providence*, may, in a great measure, be applied to the *work of redemption*, which, without all question, is as wise (and, if understood, would appear as wise) as all possible *consultations*, and *decrees*, could have rendered it.

The period of innocence does not fall in here; but from the *lapse* of our *first parents*, to the finishing the *canon of the New Testament*, and the *government* of the *church* ever since, it was, step by step, foreseen, and all along conducted with the highest wisdom.

The call of *Abraham*, God's treatment of that patriarch, choosing *Isaac*, rather than *Ishmael*^a, as heir of the great promise made to *Abraham* and his seed; — and *Jacob* rather than *Esau*, before the children were borne, or had done good or evil; i. e. his bestowing fewer blessings upon the descendents of the one than upon those of the other (which in *Hebrew* phrase, is to love the one, and hate the other^c.) — The præfigurations and prædictions

^a Rom. ix. 7, &c.

^c Mal. i. 2, 3.

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dictions of the *Messiah*, the time and manner of his coming; his *birth*, *life*, *doctrine*, *miracles* and *sufferings*; his *resurrection*, *ascension*, the *spread* of his *doctrine* after his *departure into heaven*, his present *dominion*, and his returning as *judge*; — his casting off the unbelieving *Jews*; and, together with the believing *Jews*, taking in the believing *Gentiles*; — the terms of *salvation* pitched upon, *viz.* *repentance*, *faith*, and an *holy*, *virtuous life*; and the final adjudging men to *rewards* or *punishments*, according as their works have been, — are as wise events, and as stedily carried on, as if they had been millions of years in *contriving*; and, after that, writ down among the *decrees*, and in the *records of heaven*, to be punctually regarded, and fulfilled in their season.

But, let us not suppose, that to *create*, *govern*, or *redeem the world*, *God* had any need to study upon it, and lay down *rules* to go by, as the wisest men find occasion to do, before they ingage in matters of moment.

A child may be forced to view, first letters, then syllables, and then single words; before he can read a short sentence. But *a man* (that can read well) takes it in a single glance of the eye. And, *as the heavens are high above the earth*, so *God's thoughts transcend ours*; — infinitely more than the wisest of us surpasse unexperienced children.

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He had no more occasion to *pause*, and *deliberate*, and lay down *rules* for his own conduct, from all *eternity*, than he has now. What! was there any fear of his mistaking afterwards, if he had not prepared *decrees*, and kept such *records* by him, to *consult* (upon occasion) what he himself was to do? Was he wiser before the *creation*? or, had he then more leisure; that he should take that opportunity to settle all his affairs, and make rules for himself, from which he was never to vary?

He has, doubtless, the same *wisdom*, *power*, and all other *perfections*, at this day, which he had from all *eternity*, without any addition, diminution, or the least alteration; and is now as capable of making *decrees*, or rather has no more occasion for them now, than formerly: his understanding being always equally clear and bright, and his wisdom *infallible* and *immutable*.

Upon the whole, this is an *allusion*, or *comparison*, to what we find in ourselves; but *comparisons* must not be strained beyond their primary intention. — Our Savior will come to judgment as a thief in the night, i. e. suddenly, and surprizingly; but not to rob and murder, which yet *thieves* in the night commonly do.

Thus far I have shown you the nature of this popular representation of the *thoughts* and *actions*

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I. §. 5

actions of the *divine being*; and made it (I hope) clearly to appear, that, though counsels and subsequent *decrees* are ascribed to *God*, yet his *wisdom* is equivalent, or superior to them all; — that *consultations* can be ascribed to him, in no other than a figurative sense; — and that, though he cannot be undetermined, one moment, in his purposes and designs, yet *his decrees* are of a very different nature from the decrees of the wisest *senate*, or mightiest monarch upon earth.

But this matter deserves to be considered yet further. For, by tracing the *language* to its first rise, we shall take the most likely method to come at the knowledge of the *things*, which are thereby signified. In doing this, it will be very proper to consider the *rise* and *original* of such *language*, in general; and how such *phrases* and *expressions* came to be applied to *christians* in particular.

I. As to the rise and original of such *language* in general; this is so justly represented, and so well expressed, by Mr. *Locke*^f, that I cannot do better than quote his words.

“ It may lead us a little towards the original of all our notions and knowledge, if we
“ remark how great a dependence our words
“ have on common, sensible ideas; and how
“ those, which are made use of, to stand for
“ actions and notions, quite removed from
“ sense,

^f Essay on the human understanding, book, iii. chap. 1. §. 5.

“ sense, have their rise from thence, and
 “ from obvious, sensible *ideas* are transfered
 “ to more abstruse significations, and made
 “ to stand for *ideas*, which come not under
 “ the cognizance of our senses, v. g. to ima-
 “ gine, apprehend, comprehend, adhere, con-
 “ ceive, instil, disgust, disturbance, tranquil-
 “ lity, &c. are all words taken from the ope-
 “ rations of *sensible* things, and applied to
 “ certain modes of *thinking*. *Spirit*, in its
 “ primary signification, is *breath*; *angel*, a
 “ *messenger*. And, I doubt not, but, if we
 “ could trace them to their sources, we should
 “ find, in all languages, the names, which
 “ stand for things, that fall not under our
 “ senses, to have had their first rise from
 “ sensible ideas; by which we may give
 “ some kind of guess, what kind of notions
 “ they were, and whence derived, which
 “ filled their minds, who were the first be-
 “ ginners of *languages*; and how nature, even
 “ in the naming of things, unawares sug-
 “ gested to men the originals and principles
 “ of all their knowledge; whilst, to give
 “ names, that might make known, to others,
 “ any operations, they felt in themselves, or
 “ any other *ideas*, that came not under their
 “ senses, they were fain to borrow words
 “ from ordinary known *ideas* of *sensation*, by
 “ that mean, to make others the more easily
 “ to conceive those operations, they experi-
 “ mented in themselves, which made no out-
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“ward, sensible appearances. And then,
“when they had got known and agreed
“names, to signify those internal operations
“of their own minds, they were sufficiently
“furnished to make known, by words, all
“their other ideas; since they could consist
“of nothing, but either of outward, sensible
“perceptions, or of the inward operations
“of their minds about them. We having,
“as has been proved, no *ideas* at all, but
“what originally come, either from sensible
“objects without, or what we feel within
“ourselves, — from the inward workings of
“our own spirits, of which we are conscious
“to ourselves within.”

To this clear and just account of Mr. Locke's, I need only add, that, whoever carefully considers the words made use of, upon this subject, [such as to *consult*, or *deliberate*, to *know*, or *foreknow*, to *decree* or *determine*, or *prædestinate* and *prædetermine*, and the like,] will find that they take their rise, either from *sensation*, or *reflection*: that is, from external objects, or from the operations of our own minds; and from whichever of these two sources they originally procede, they ought not, without great caution, and only in the highest and most sublime sense, to which we can exalt them, to be ascribed to the *ever-blessed God*. Otherwise, we shall not think, or speak of him, with that reverence and
K justnesse,

justnesse, which becomes us, when we think or speak of the most perfect being.

II. I am to show how such phrases and expressions came to be applied to God's gracious designs concerning *christians*, in particular.

As human language, about common affairs, takes its rise from *sensation* and *reflection*; so doeth the language of *holy scripture*. For that is, no other than the *popular language*, applied to *religious matters*. The way, for us to come acquainted with the divine being, and with the things of another world, is not by looking upon them immediately, and as they are in themselves; but by comparing them to things, which we already see, or know. For even the *gospel*, which is the most perfect revelation of the mind and will of *God*, gives men no new *simple ideas*²; it only represents things unseen and unknown, by comparing them to things, with which men were well acquainted before. The language of *scripture*, therefore, is, like that in common use, adapted to the present circumstances and notions of mankind; and by that mean it is calculated to do the most good.

But

² I do not mean, by this, that there is nothing discovered by *revelation*, but what *human reason* might, of itself, have found out. No; I am satisfied that *revelation* has made several new discoveries, or given us several new *complex ideas*; tho' I do not apprehend that it has given us any new, *simple ideas*.

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2 Sam. xiv
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But there are other reasons, why the expressions made use of, concerning this subject, are, in the *New Testament*, applied to *christians*; such as follow, —

Long before the coming of *Christ*, the *heathen world* revolted from the true *God*, to the service of idols and false gods, and therefore they were *reprobated*, or *rejected*.

But the nation of the *Jews* were *chosen*, and separated from *that corrupt masse*, to be the people of *God*, and to be holy unto the *Lord*; and, therefore, they went under such titles, or denominations as these, the *children*^h, or *sons of God*; *borne of God*, or *his first-borne*ⁱ; the *saints*^k, the *holy people*^l; a *kingdom of priests*; a *chosen*, or *holy seed*^m; the *elect*ⁿ; the *called*^o; the *people of God*^p; a *peculiar people*^q; the *lord's inheritance*, or *the lot of his inheritance*^r; *holy and beloved*^t; and the like^u.

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Now

^h Deut. xiv. 1.ⁱ Exod. iv. 22. Hof. xi. 1.^k Deut. xxxiii. 3. ^l Sam. ii. 9. Psal. xvi. 3. & l. 5. & cxlix. 1; 5; 9.^l Deut. vii. 6. & xiv. 2;21. ^m Exod. xix. 6. & xxxiii. 13. Deut. iv. 34; 37. & x. 15. Is. vi. 13. & lxi. 9.ⁿ All the nation of *Israel*, including both good and bad, were called the *elect* and *chosen* of *God*. Besides the texts above, see 1 Kings iii. 8. Ps. cv. 6; 43. and cvi. 5. II.

xli. 8, 9. & xliii. 20, 21. & xlv. 4. & lxv. 9; 22. Jer. xxxiii. 24.

^o Isa. xlviii. 12.^p Judg. xx. 2.2 Sam. xiv. 13. ^q Exod. xix. 5. Deut. xiv. 2. & xxvi. 18. Psal. cxxxv. 4.^r Deut. iv. 20. & ix.26;—29. & xxxii. 9. ^t Psal. lx. 5. & cviii. 6.^u It appears to me to be a very remarkable confirmation of the account, which is here given, of the rise and occasion

Now the *gospel*, having the most strict connection with the books of the *Old Testament*, where these phrases frequently occur; and our *Lord* and his *apostles* being native *Jews*, and begining to preach first in *Judea*, or within the borders of the *land of Israel*; the language, in which they preached, would of course abound with the idioms and phrases of the *Jewish* nation. And these being the phrases, well known, from their common use among the *Jews*, when the *Messiah* came; it is easy to see why such of that nation, as refused to believe and obey him, came under the denomination of the *reprobated*, or *rejected*. For they no longer continued to be the *people of God*; and, therefore, they had no more the former appellations given them. Whereas these honorable names and titles were continued unto all such *Jews*, as imbraced *christianity*; and, upon imbracing the christian religion, their privileges were increased.

Nay,

occasion of this sort of phrases; — that pious and virtuous men, or the people of *God*, were never called his *elect*, or *chosen* people, for 1500 years, and more, from the creation. The choosing, and separating, the *nation of Israel*, from the other nations, who were sunk into idolatry and vice, gave the first occasion to this sort of language. And, as the separating the *christians* from the *unbelieving Jews*, and *Gentiles*, was a similar event; it is no wonder that it should be spoken of, in like words and phrases.

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Nay, further; besides the subjects of the *Messiah's* kingdom, who were originally of the *Jewish nation*; it was the *decree* or purpose of *God*, from the beginning, instead of the unbelieving *Jews*, to take for his people, under the *Messiah*, all such of the *Gentiles* as would imbrace the gospel; and, as the *Jewish nation* generally, or in a body, rejected the *Messiah*, they, who had, 'till then, been the *people of God*, were in a body rejected; for refusing him, whom *God* had sent to be their king and deliverer.

The small *remnant* of the *Jewish nation*, that imbraced the gospel, were received into the *kingdom of God*, which he graciously erected under his own son, the *Messiah*; and so they continued to be his people, along with the converted *Gentiles*, who, all together, made now the *church and people of God*.

And, as the *Jewish nation*, before the coming of *Christ*, so the *Jewish* and *Gentile christians*, after his coming, had the names of the *elect*, or *chosen people of God*; and the other appellations, which had formerly belonged to the nation of the *Jews*. And, together with such high and honorable names, they were likewise, by the free grace of *God*, intitled unto all the privileges of the *chosen people of God*; and nothing, but their own wickedness and apostasy, could cut them off from such honors and advantages.

150 *The Doctrine of Prædestination*

As God had determined, from the beginning, to take the *Gentiles* to be his people, under the *Messiah*, together with the *believing Jews*; and not only *purposed* it in his own mind, but *foretold* it also, by many of the *antient prophets*; — hence arose the expressions, concerning his *foreknowing* them, and *prædestinating*, or *prædetermining* to *choose*, *call*, *justify* (or accept) them, and treat them as his children, or people.----But, to examine all the particular phrases, or expressions, as they lie in the New Testament; and to show, from their connection with the context, their original signification, and to what persons they properly belong, would far exceed the bounds of *this Letter*. --- I have by me *an examination of the texts relating to this subject*, which I may (possibly) hereafter submit to your perusal. I would now observe that there is one single text, *viz.* 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. which, if rightly translated, would give the *English* reader a just notion of *the scriptural doctrine of election and reprobation*, and clearly show him that particular persons are not, in *holy writ*, represented, as *elect*, *absolutely and unconditionally, to everlasting life*; or *prædestinated, absolutely and unconditionally, to everlasting damnation*; but that all *Christians*, in general, are *elect* to enjoy the *Christian privileges*, here upon earth; which, if they abuse, those very *elect* persons will become *reprobates*. The words of that text are the words of *St. Paul*, concerning himself, who declared, “ I keep under my
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“ body, and bring it into subjection ; lest,
 “ by any means, when I have preached to
 “ others, I myself *should become a reprobate*.---
 “ αὐτὸς ἀδίκημος γένομαι.” Now St. Paul was cer-
 tainly a *chosen vessel*, an *elect person*, if ever
 there was one. And yet he declares, it was
 possible that *he himself*, though an *elect person*,
 might *become a reprobate*. Nay, if he had
 not kept under his body, and brought his
 senses, passions and appetites in subjection to
 his conscience, he had actually become a *re-*
probate ; though he had been so long an *elect*
 person, a Christian, and an Apostle ; and
 though he had preached to others, and been
 the mean of the salvation of multitudes.

I would further observe, before I conclude,
 that the *decrees of God* are some of them *ab-*
solute, and others *conditional*.

Concerning the inanimate parts of the cre-
 ation, they are *absolute*. That the sun, moon
 and stars should be placed at such a distance,
 and move within such and such orbits, or fi-
 nish their various revolutions in certain, fixed
 periods of time ; — these things are according
 to the *absolute and unconditional decrees of God*,
 and therefore they, of themselves, can never
 vary ; because what he has so determined, he
 himself, by his own mighty power, doeth
 actually bring to passe ; *for who can resist his*
will ? But should he always determine, and
 act, after the same manner, with creatures,
 indued with intelligence and agency, he

would destroy their very make and constitution, and treat them (not like what they are, but) like what they are not, *that is*, like mere stocks and stones, who have no understanding, or agency at all; — a thing, which infinite wisdom can never do!

Again; with respect to creatures indued with intelligence and moral agency, God may justly be considered in two different views, *viz.* as creator, original proprietor and Lord of all; or as their moral governor and judge^u.

In the first of these views, God, as sovereign Lord, and original proprietor of all, dispenses his gifts, or favors, to his creatures, with perfect wisdom; but by no rules, or methods of proceeding, that we are acquainted with. — The time when he creates us, or brings us into a state of trial; the country we shall live in; the parents we shall descend from; our constitution of body, or peculiar turn of mind; our riches or poverty, our good and liberal, or disadvantageous education; the scene of tranquility or afflictions we are to pass through; — these and other circumstances are (I doubt not) appointed with perfect wisdom, but by rules that lie quite out of our sight.

Whereas the divine rules, or methods of proceeding, with regard to us, when God is considered as our governor and judge, are clearly

^u See Mr. Foster's Sermons, Vol. III. Sermon. I.

clearly reveled and perfectly well known, *viz.* That we are here in a state of trial; and that, *as we now sow, so shall we afterwards reap*: that we shall finally be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and receive rewards or punishments, in the state of retribution, in an exact proportion to our behavior in this state of trial.

The *decrees of God*, therefore, concerning the future state of mankind, appear to me to be evidently *conditional*. For, without repentance, faith, and holiness, no man can see the Lord. And no man, who is penitent, believing, and holy (as far as I can learn from the whole scriptural account) shall be condemned, or miss of salvation. These, therefore, are the terms and conditions, on which God has decreed to make us happy, by the mediation of his son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and, without which, he has decreed we shall not be happy.

Considered in this view, his præscience, or prædetermination, doeth not, in the least clash with his being a law-giver, ruler and judge. And, if you suppose him to have determined an affair of such consequence, according to the *counsel of his own will*, it can only mean, that he did not resolve upon it rashly or precipitantly; that it was not the effect of humor, caprice, or passion; but of wisdom and goodness. Though, therefore, he has declared, that “ he has mercy upon whom
“ he

“ he will have mercy, and hardens whom
 “ he pleases.” Yet his is not the will of an
 arbitrary, capricious, or tyrannical being. He
 wills, or resolves, upon nothing but what is
 infinitely wise and good; and therefore his
 will is a most proper rule and measure of
 judgment. He will show mercy (as he has
 assured us) to none but the penitent, and
 harden none but such as remain impenitent
 and incorrigible, after sufficient means have
 been tried upon them; and such, indeed, he
 leaves to themselves, as parents abandon hope-
 less and incorrigible children. And, if any
 man should ask, “ Why he will not save the
 “ wicked, and harden the pious and well
 “ disposed?” Might he not justly answer;
 “ I will show mercy to whom I will show
 “ mercy; and, whom I see proper, I will
 “ harden, or punish?”

We are obliged, in this manner, to inter-
 pret the texts, which speak of *God's* determi-
 ning the everlasting state of mankind; if we
 will understand the several passages of sacred
 scripture in a perfect harmony and consistence
 with each other. For there are other texts,
 which represent *God*, as waiting to see the
 end, and then examining into the circum-
 stances of the case; that he may act like an
 upright and impartial judge, and render to
 every one according as his deeds have been.
 And, from such passages, we may learn the
 purity and justice of *God*. Like a king, who
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loves his subjects, he wishes them all well; but is resolved to treat every one of them according to their different behavior; and, when he has waited to see the event, and has been a witness to all that is past, he then proceeds to act as a *righteous judge*,—making the most exact distributions of rewards and punishments, not only in kind, but also in degree.

From these considerations, we may learn to order our steps with thought and circumspection; to expect equitable treatment from him at the last; and, in the mean time, to refer all the intricate mazes of providence to the clear and impartial decision of *that great day*. — Such considerations ought to silence every murmur, and cut off all cavils. “Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Hast thou considered the case as maturely? is thy wisdom equal to judge of his? or thy goodnesse to be compared to that of the divine being?” He knows best how to manage the creation, with every individual of it, — much better than the most skilful potter to mold his different lumps of clay.

To conclude, — *Cbristianity* is not a matter of mere speculation, but a plane, practical religion; and, therefore, it is reveled in a familiar manner, and in popular language. The design of it is to lead sinners to repentance, and to establish righteous persons in virtue and piety.

156 *The Doctrine of Prædestination.*

piety. All the representations of the nature and perfections, the designs and actions of God, are there made with this view. It is, therefore, to be imbraced as a *doctrine according to godlinesse*; for it will teach us that good understanding, which all they have, who do God's commandments.

I am, Dear SIR,

Yours, &c.



TRACT.



TRACT. VII.

A BRIEF
ACCOUNT
OF
CALVIN'S

Causing *Servetus* to be burned, at *Geneva*,
for an Heretic,

Formerly published in four of the Papers, called
The Old Whig, or Consistent Protestant.

——— *Quis talia fando,
Temperet a lacrymis?*



TRACT VII.

A BRIEF

ACCOUNT

OF

CALVIN

Calvin to be burned, at Geneva
for an Heretic

Printed in London, at the Press of
J. O. W. or Captain's Printer

Printed and sold by
J. O. W. or Captain's Printer



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CONCERNING

The SECOND EDITION.

 *HIS Account of Calvin's causing Servetus to be burned at Geneva, for an Heretic, was published, some years ago, in the weekly paper, called The old Whig, or consistent Protestant. But, as the four papers, which relate to this particular subject, are not in that collection of the old Whig, which has been since printed in two Volumes, octavo, The Author hath been desired to publish this second edition, with some few additions and corrections.*

This small Pamphlet will be a proper Appendix to a Sermon, published, 1742, by the same Author, in Defence of universal Liberty and free Inquiry.

London. Aug.
10, 1743.



THE



THE
OLD WHIG,
OR THE
CONSISTENT PROTESTANT.


N^o 152. *Thursday, February 2, 1737-8.*

To the Author of the OLD WHIG.

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.

HOR. Ep. I.

SIR,

HOUGH you are a professed *Pro-*
testant, yet I am fully persuaded
that you will readily condemn *Per-*
secution, which is the worst Part of
Popery, where-ever it is found. For this
reason I here send you a brief Account of *Mi-*
chael Servetus, and of the Treatment which he
L met

met with, from several of the renowned Reformers, and particularly from *John Calvin* *.

Michael Servetus was borne in the year 1509, at *Villaneueva*, in *Arragon*, in the kingdom of *Spain*: His father, who was a Notary, sent him to the University of *Thoulouse*, in *France*, to study the *Civil Law*. *Servetus* began to read the *Bible* then, which he had never done before. It does not appear that there were any *Antitrinitarians* in *France*, or any where else, at that time; and therefore it is not improbable that he himself broached the new doctrine, for which he was afterwards put to death *. Perhaps he applied himself to read the Holy Scriptures, because the *Reformation* did then make a great noise in *France*; and, being sensible that the Church wanted to be reformed, it is not unlikely that he went so far, of his own head, as to suppose that the *Trinity* was one of those doctrines,

* *This Account is mostly an Abridgment of what was published in the Memoirs of Literature, for the Year 1711.*

x *Dr. Geddes*, speaking of the persecution of the protestants in *Spain*, which caused several to fly their country, says, — “ I am apt to think that the unhappy *Michael Servetus*, the most eminent physician of his age, was one of the *Spanish* refugees of this persecution; but, wherever that unhappy man learnt the heresies, for which he was put to death at *Geneva*; certain it is, that he did not bring them out of *Spain* with him; none, that were put to death in that kingdom for being protestants, having, by their adversaries, ever been charged with any of his heresies”. *Geddes's Tracts*, Vol. I. p. 473.

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doctrines, which were to be rejected. However that be, he grew very fond of his opinion; and, after he had been two or three years at *Thoulouse*, he resolved to retire into *Germany*, and to set up for a *Reformer*. He went to *Basil*, by way of *Lions* and *Geneva*; and, having had some conference at *Basil* with *Oecolampadius*, he set out for *Strasburg*; being extremely desirous to converse with *Bucer* and *Capito*, two celebrated Reformers of that city. At his departure from *Basil*, he left a manuscript, which he had wrote against the *Trinity*, in the hands of *Conrad Roufs*, a bookseller; who sent it afterwards to *Haguenau*. *Servetus* went thither from *Strasburg*, to get it printed, in the year 1531. That piece was published at *Strasburg* and *Francfort*, before the month of *August*; and when the author was not above twenty one years of Age. When it was brought into *Switzerland*, several *Protestant* Divines were very much displeased at it; as appears from a letter of *Oecolampadius* to *Bucer*: “ I saw this Week (says he) our
 “ friends at *Berne*, who sent their kind salutations to you and *Capito*. They are
 “ very much offended with a book intituled,
 “ *De Trinitatis Erroribus*, which some of
 “ them have seen. I desire you would acquaint *Luther* that this book was printed
 “ out of this country and without our knowledge. For (to mention but one article) it
 “ is an impudent thing to affirm, as the author

" does, That the *Lutherans* do not under-
 " stand the doctrine of *Justification*. But
 " that man, whether he be a *Photinian*, or
 " of any other sect, thinks he knows more
 " than every body else. Our churches will
 " be very ill spoken of, unlesse our Divines
 " make it their businesse to cry him down.
 " I beseech you, in particular, to keep a
 " watchful eye over it, and to make an apo-
 " logy for our churches, at least in your con-
 " futation inscribed to the *Emperor*. We
 " know not how *that Beast* came to creep in
 " among us; he wrests all passages of Scrip-
 " ture to prove, That *the Son* is not coeternal
 " and consubstantial with *the Father*, and,
 " That the *Man Christ* is *the Son of God*.
 This Letter is dated *August 5, 1531*^y.

The Magistrates of *Basil* desiring to know
Oecolampadius's opinion concerning the book
 of *Servetus*, that Reformer made a short dis-
 course^z, in their presence, in order to show
 that it was a pernicious book; but he expressed
 himself with great *moderation*; which was
 certainly very commendable, and becoming
 a *Divine*. *Oecolampadius* wrote also two let-
 ters to *Servetus*, about his book; wherein he
 endeavored to confute him in a very civil man-
 ner, and intreated him to renounce his er-
 rors. The next year (1532) *Servetus* pub-
 lished

^y Vide *Oecolampad. & Zuingl. Epistol. Lib. IV. Pag. 801. Basil. 1592. Quarto.*

^z Vide, ut *supra*, *Lib. I. Pag. 83.*

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lished another book against the *Trinity*, at *Haguenau*. After he had published these two books, he resolved to return to *France*; because he was poor, and did not understand the *German* language. He himself alleged these two reasons, for it, at his trial. While he was there, *Melanchton* (who read *Servetus's* books very much) wrote a letter to *Joa- chim Camerarius*; wherein he told him what he thought of *Servetus* and his books: He declared, That *Servetus* appeared to him to be a subtle and cunning man, but that he wanted gravity; That his thoughts were confused; That he had not sufficiently meditated upon the things he treated of; and, That his notion of Justification was very extravagant. *Melanchton* adds, That he "was always afraid that disputes about the *Trinity* would break out, some time or other." But, as that is a very curious passage, and looks almost like a *prophecy*, which has been most remarkably accomplished since 1533, I will put down his words in the margin ^a.

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Servetus,

^a Περὶ τῆς τριῖδος, scis me semper veritum esse fore, ut hæc aliquando erumperent. Bone Deus! quales tragædias excitabit hæc quæstio ad posteros, εἴ ἔστιν ὑπόστασις ὁ λόγος; εἴ ἔστιν ὑπόστασις τὸ πνεῦμα; Ego me refero ad illas scripturæ voces, quæ jubent invocare Christum, quod est ei honorem divinitatis tribuere, & plenum consolationis est. Τὰς δὲ ἰδέας τῶν ὑποστάσεων καὶ διαφορὰς ἀκριβὲς ζητεῖν ἐπ' αὐτοῦ συμφέρεται. "You know that I was always afraid these disputes about the *Trinity* would break out, some time or other. Good God! what tragedies will

Servetus, having been two or three years at *Lions*, went to *Paris*, where he studied *Physic*. He took his degree of *Master of Arts*, and was admitted *Doctor of Physic*, in that University; and he afterwards practised *Physic*, and wrote some books in that science. He was likewise, for some time, corrector of the presse at *Lions*. *Beza*^b informs us, that *Calvin* knew *Servetus* at *Paris*, and opposed his doctrine. The same author adds, That *Servetus*, having agreed to ingage in a dispute with *Calvin*, upon a certain day and a certain hour, dared not appear in that conference.

While *Servetus* was at *Paris*, his Book *De Trinitatis Erroribus* was dispersed in *Italy*; and very much approved by many *Italians*, who designed to forsake the church of *Rome*. *Melanchton*, being informed of it, wrote a Letter^c to the Senate of *Venice*, in the year 1539, importing, That a book of *Servetus*, who had revived the error of *Paulus Samosatenus*, was handed about, in their country.

He

“ will this question raise among posterity, *Whether the*
 “ *Logos be a subsistence, or person? Whether the Spirit*
 “ *be a subsistence, or person? I have recourse to those*
 “ words of *Scripture*, which command me to worship
 “ *Christ*, i. e. to ascribe the honor of *Divinity* to him,
 “ which is full of consolation. But it is by no means
 “ expedient accurately to examine into the ideas of the
 “ subsistences, or persons, and of their difference.

^b *History of the Reformed Church of France, Vol. I, Page 14. Antwerp. 1580.*

^c *Melancht. Epist. Lib. I. Ep. III.*

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He besought them to use their utmost endeavors, that the impious errors of that man might be avoided, rejected, and abhorred. It is not improbable that *Lælius Socinus*, *Faustus's* uncle, and several other *Italians*, took their Antitrinitarian notions from *Servetus's* book. That physician, having finished his studies at *Paris*, left that city, to go and practise physic in some other places; which he did, two or three years, in a town about twelve leagues distance from *Lions*; and then at *Vienne*, in *Dauphine*, for the space of ten, or twelve years.

I find very few particulars relating to him, during that time; though he then wrote several letters to his friends and acquaintance. He was at *Lions* in the year 1544, before he settled at *Vienne*. And, in *Lions*, he corrected the proofs of a new edition of *Pagnin's Latin Bible*, and added a preface to it, under the name of *Villa-novanus*, from the name of the town where he was borne. For, in *France*, he went under the name of *Villaneuve*. *Servetus* also added some marginal notes to that Bible; of which we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. *Calvin*^a calls them *impertinent and impious Notes*; and says, "That *Servetus* got 500 Livres from the bookseller for his pains." That Reformer kept a

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long

^a *Fidelis Exposit. Errorum Michaelis Serveti, &c.* among *Calvin's Theological Tracts*, Pag. 830. Geneva, 1576.

long correspondence with *Servetus*, by way of letters. He informs us, ^e That he endeavored, by the space of sixteen years, to reclaim that physician from his errors. *Servetus* wrote several letters to *Calvin* at *Geneva*, from *Lions* and *Dauphine*, and consulted him about several points. *Calvin* sais, That *Servetus* sent him the three following Questions, from *Lions*, and desired him to answer them. I. *Whether the Man Jesus, that was crucified, was the Son of God; and, What was the Reason of his Filiation?* II. *Whether the Kingdom of Christ is in men? When may a man enter into it; and, When is he regenerated?* III. *Whether Christian baptism ought to be performed in faith, like the Lord's supper? and, To what end these things were instituted in the New covenant?* *Calvin* answered these Queries. But *Servetus*, far from being satisfied with his explications, wrote him a second letter, containing a confutation of his answers. *Calvin*, being very much displeased at that letter, made a sharp reply, as he himself owns ^f. Whereupon *Servetus*, who was no lesse fiery than his Antagonist, grew very angry with him. *Calvin* sais, That this dispute occasioned the hatred which *Servetus* conceived for him; and complains, ^g That
that

^e *Ibid.* Pag. 817.

^f *Fidelis Exposit. Errorum Michaelis Serveti, &c.* Pag. 827.

^g *Ibid.* Pag. 835.

that *Heretic* did not cease from that time to make imprecations against him.

But the Account of that bitter revenge, which *Calvin* took upon *Servetus*, for his hatred and imprecations, must be deferred to another *Paper*.



The OLD WHIG, &c.

N^o 153. Thursday, February 9, 1737-8.

To the Author of the OLD WHIG.

S I R,

IN my account of *Servetus*, I have intimated that *Calvin* and he first quarrelled in an epistolary correspondence. *Servetus* sent a MS. to *Calvin* to have his judgment about it, six years before he was apprehended at *Geneva*. And, though that piece was never printed, it was produced against him at his trial. Such unfair methods do *Persecutors* and *Inquisitors* commonly take!

Calvin was so incensed against *Servetus*, that he could not forbear reviling him in his
Commen-

Commentaries on the Bible^h; for he calls him a *profligate fellow, full of pride, the proudest Knave of the Spanish Nation, a Dog, and an obscene Dog*. * Most of these Things he wrote, before *Servetus* came to *Geneva*. It is said, that there is at *Paris* an original letter of *Calvin's* to *Farrel*, wrote 1546, which was never printed; and that he there intimates, *Servetus* had wrote such intolerable things, that, if he came to *Geneva* (as he, in his letters, had proposed to do) he would use *his Power* with the magistrates, that he should not escape without losing his lifeⁱ.

Servetus (notwithstanding the bad treatment he had met with) continued in his own opinions, and boldly resolved to publish a third book against the *Trinity*, and against some other doctrines. That book, for which he was burnt at *Geneva*, came out at *Vienne* in *Dauphine*, the beginning of the year 1553, with the title of *Christianismi Restitutio*, &c. Or *the Revival of Christianity*, &c. That is the famous book, in which he, the first of all the *Physicians*, mentioned *the circulation of the blood*^k. He printed one thousand copies, but

^h See Calvin on John i. 1. 1563, and in other Editions. — In his notes on Gen. i. 3. Calvin charges *Servetus* with blasphemy, and says, *This obscene dog barks so and so*.

ⁱ See Varilla's *Histoire de l' Heresie*, ad *Aug.* 1553, p. 350, &c. *Paris*. 4to. & *Soberiana*, p. 48, 49. of the Dutch Edition, 1694.

^k See Dr. Wotton concerning Antient and Modern Learning. p. 229. Anno 1697.

but most of them were burned, either at *Vienne*, with the Author's effigie, or at *Frankfort*; which is the reason why *that book* is so very scarce¹.

Servetus was neither an *Arian*, nor a *Pho-*
tinian. For he asserted "not only the præ-
"existence of *Christ*; but also that *Christ* is
"not a Creature, nor a Being of a finite
"power; but true God; and that he ought
"to be worshiped as such." However, he is
reckoned to have expressed himself so confus-
edly, that it is not easy to have a clear no-
tion of his doctrine. He calls it *a Mystery*,
unknown to the World; but at the same time
owns, that such, as acknowledge *Christ* to be
the *Messiah* and the *Son of God*, only as he is a
Man, may attain to salvation. He expresses
himself, on all occasions, with great indig-
nation against the *Church of Rome*, and takes
it to be the *Beast*, mentioned in the *Revela-*
tion. I forbear to quote particular passages,
because I would not be tedious; but there is
such an acrimony in them, as would have
incited the *Roman Catholics* to put him to
death, if he had not denied the *Trinity*.

Though the *Christianismi Restitutio* was
printed, very privately, and without *Serve-*
tus's name, *Calvin* was informed that *Servetus*
was the author of it, and had a copy sent
him. Whereupon he desired one *William*
Trie

¹ There was a Copy of that Book 1613, in the Library
of the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel.

Trie to write a letter to *Lions*, in *March* 1553, wherein *Servetus* was represented as a very pernicious man. That letter was accompanied with the Title page, the Index, and the first leaves of the book. *Servetus* complained of it, upon his trial, at *Geneva*; and said, "That *Calvin* had sent those sheets to *Lions*, to have him arrested and prosecuted as an " *Heretic*."

About a fortnight after, *Calvin* sent, by the same man, above twenty *Latin* letters, which he had received from *Servetus*, that he might be the better convicted of his *Herefy*. These letters were mentioned in the sentence pronounced against him, at *Vienne*. *Calvin* succeeded in his design, *Servetus* was apprehended at *Vienne*, in the begining of *June*, by virtue of *William Trie's* letters, and imprisoned; but used very well in his confinement, which was of but very short continuance. For two days after, upon a *friday*, about nine a clock in the morning, *Servetus* asked the jaylor for the key of the house of office, and made his escape through it. The magistrates, being informed that he had run away, met *June* 17, and condemned him to be burned alive, with a slow fire, if he could be apprehended. And, in the mean time, to be burned in effigie, with his books. Accordingly, on the same day, his effigie, being laid in a dung-cart, by the hands of the common hangman, was carried to the place
of

of execution, fastened to a gibbet, and burned, with five bales of his books, by the said executioner.

I thought to have proceeded to what happened to him at *Geneva*, where he suffered in person, and not in effigie. But I find I cannot give you a particular relation of his remarkable trial, if I should comprize it within the compasse of *this paper*.

I would, therefore, conclude with such reflections as these. “ When *Servetus* was
“ thus treated, it was a common thing to
“ burn the *Protestants* in *France*. That very
“ year, many of them suffered death, that the
“ *Popish Religion* might be defended against
“ the progresse of the *Reformed*.

“ *Tantum Relligio potuit suadere malorum?*

“ *Can religion induce men to be guilty of so*
“ *much mischief?*

“ An historical commentary on these
“ words would be a very curious work, and
“ an admirable antidote against *Persecution*.
“ *Cruelty* is the distinguishing character of the
“ *Church of Rome*! Surely *Protestants*, who
“ have so often and so severely felt the dread-
“ ful effects of that violent spirit, and bitter
“ zeal for Religion; — Those, who have
“ themselves come out of *that great tribula-*
“ *tion*, should think themselves, in a more
“ pecu-

“ peculiar manner, obliged to expresse their ab-
 “ horrence of *Persecution*, upon all occasions,
 “ and in every kind and degree. But it
 “ must be owned, in behalf of *those persecu-*
 “ *ting Protestants*, about the time of the
 “ *Reformation*, that their *spirit of persecution*
 “ was a remainder of *Popery*, — a pernici-
 “ ous error, which they had imbibed in the
 “ Church of *Rome*! She is, in a great mea-
 “ sure, answerable for the execution of *Ser-*
 “ *vetus*. If the *Roman Catholics* had never
 “ put any body to death, on account of *Re-*
 “ *ligion*, I am apt to believe *Servetus* would
 “ not then have been tried, in a *Protestant*
 “ city. *Calvin*, and all the magistrates of
 “ *Geneva*, in the year 1553, had been borne,
 “ and bred up, in the *Church of Rome*^m. This
 “ is the best apologie, that can be made
 “ for them: For the thing itself is, by no
 “ means, to be vindicated; — though most
 “ parties, when in power, have shown too
 “ much inclination to *persecute*, in some
 “ degree, those who could not think just as
 “ they did.

“ When

^m *Dr. Lombard's history of persecution*, p. 135. printed
 at London, 1747. “ All that can be said in favor of
 “ *Calvin*, in regard to this, [*burning Servetus as an He-*
 “ *retic*,] is, that men do not get rid of their prejudices
 “ all at once. But the making it a duty to *burn here-*
 “ *tics*, which is unquestionably a *greater heresy* than
 “ even that of *Servetus*, was one of the insupportable
 “ heresies of the church of *Rome*, and one of those things,
 “ which *Calvin* and *Beza* ought wholly to have left
 “ behind them.”

“ When will this *anti-christian spirit* intirely cease! And persons in power acknowledge *Liberty* to be the *natural light* of those who differ from them, and of all mankind! — And that as freely and as heartily as they would claim it for *themselves*, were they the minority, and wanted that indulgence, which they are commonly so loath to grant to others?”



The OLD WHIG, &c.

N^o 154. *Thursday, February 16, 1737-8.*

Tantæne animis cælestibus iræ? VIRG.

And can such anger dwell in heavenly breasts?

To the Author of the OLD WHIG.

S I R,

I NOW send you the remaining part of the History of Doctor Servetus. After he had made his escape from *Vienne*, he resolved to retire into *Naples*, and to practise physic, among his countrymen, who were settled in that city. He set out to go by way of *Geneva*, where he arrived on foot, having left

left off riding, at the place where he lay the night before. He lodged at the *Rose-Inn*, designing to hire a boat, the next day, in order to go to *Zurich*.

And probably he went to *Italy*, by way of *Geneva*, rather than by that of *Piedmont*, in hopes that, if he was discovered, the *Protestants* would have been more merciful to him than the *Papists*. But he was very much mistaken, if he expected such favor. For *Calvin*, being informed he was in town, got one of the magistrates to apprehend him, and put him in prisonⁿ. He had about him 97 pieces of gold, a gold chain weighing about twenty crowns, and six gold rings; all which he delivered to the jaylor, as I suppose he was obliged to do.

When *Calvin* had got him fast, he employed one *Nicholas de la Fontaine*, his own servant, some say his cook, to commence a prosecution against *Servetus*, in order to bring him to a trial. He exhibited thirty-eight Articles against him; on which he desired he should be examined; most of them were concerning his opinions. *Servetus* readily confessed himself *Author* of the *Books* ascribed to him, whether printed or MS.

They kept him in prison, in all, about five months; but his trial began *August* 14; after

ⁿ That *Servetus* was apprehended by *Calvin's* means, see *Beza's life of Calvin*, prefixed to *Calvin's annotations*, p. 16.

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after which he was frequently called to the bar, before the judges of that city; sometimes day after day, for several days together. They raked into his whole life and actions, that they might multiply their accusations. And, every time he appeared, they commonly laid new things to his charge; but *abusing Calvin* was almost always one of the articles against him. *La Fontaine* at first made himself a prisoner, the more effectually to convince the judges that he was able to prove his charge. But he was released, the second day of his trial, upon engaging to go on with the prosecution, *Calvin's* brother being security for him; after which, one *Colladon* also joined in the accusation.

The Articles, exhibited against him, ran upon several particulars: They charged him with saying that *Judæa was not so fruitful as it had been represented*; as if he had thereby reflected on the account, which *Moses* gives, of its great fruitfulness. Whereas most travellers intimate, that it is now *a barren land*, though it was formerly exceeding fruitful.

They charged him with applying the 53d chapter of *Isaiab* to *Cyrus*, though he acknowledged the mystical sense concerned *Christ*, who is principally meant in that chapter.

But the chief accusation against him was his notions of the *Trinity* (for he held that *Christ*, in Scripture, is never called the *Son of God*; but only *as he is a Man*; or that he was

M

not

not the Son of God *from eternity*, but only from the time of his incarnation) and his denying *Infant Baptism*.

August 21. Calvin came into court, attended with all the ministers of *Geneva*. That reformer and the prisoner had a long dispute about the true sense of the words, *Person* and *Hypostasis*. After the dispute was over, Calvin and his attendents went away; and the judges allowed him to buy, at his own charge, such books as he wanted, if they could be had at *Geneva*, or *Lions*. He had, likewise, three or four books, which Calvin had brought and left with him. And finally, they allowed him pen and ink, to write a petition, as he desired. After which, he wrote several petitions to his judges.

In the first of them, he shows, "that noman
" ought to be prosecuted, before the ci-
" vil magistrate, for his *religious opinions*;
" unlesse he was guilty of *sedition*, or di-
" sturbing the public peace." — And he
begged of them very earnestly to allow him an
Attorney, to plead his cause; because he was
a foreigner, and unacquainted with their cus-
toms. But that was too great a favor to be
granted to an *Heretic*!

August 31. there came the captain of the
Royal palace at *Vienne*, with a letter from
some of the magistrates there, to the magi-
strates of *Geneva*; in which they thanked
them, for informing them, that *Servetus* had
been

been apprehended, in that city. And they desired them to send him back to *Vienne*, that their sentence might be executed upon him. When *Servetus* was at the bar, and the captain came in, the judges asked the prisoner, "Whether he would stay at *Geneva*, or go back to *Vienne*, with the jaylor, that was come to fetch him?" Upon which he threw himself on the ground, and, melting into tears, he most earnestly begged of his judges, that they would not send him back; but try him at *Geneva*, and deal with him as they should see fit. — "Here was a scene, which would have moved the heart of almost any man, but an *Inquisitor*! a poor, friendless, destitute *foreigner*; taken up, as he was passing through their city, where he had done them no injury; — and imprisoned, because he was not of the same opinion with them; — *with them* (I say) who differed from the majority, and had lately broke off from the *Church of Rome*. And, when he was upon the ground, at their feet, all in tears, begging earnestly for protection and mercy; their *zeal* had no ears, their hearts no sympathy and relenting. They only kept him from returning to *Vienne*, that they might have the glory of burning him in *Geneva*. Can mortal men treat one another thus, and yet hope for mercy from God?" — But I refrain! though surely it is impossible to read such

passages, without weeping eyes and a bleeding heart!

The jaylor returned to *Vienne*, and left *Servetus* behind him; after he had got an attestation, from that miserable wretch, that he had escaped without his assistance.

September 1. *Servetus* refused, out of generosity, to name those who were in his debt, in *France*, though he was much pressed to it; as thinking, very probably, that the government would seize on his effects. On that day, *Calvin* appeared in court again; and afterwards they had another dispute in writing, which was to as little purpose as all the rest.

September 15. *Servetus* presented a petition to his judges, begging they would make an end of the affair; and intimated, "that he
" was eat up with *lice*; that his breeches
" were torne in pieces, and that he had no
" other pair; nor any other doublet, or shirt,
" but a very sorry one." And, in the conclusion of that petition, he desired *Calvin* might be prosecuted, as being *an unjust accuser*, and the author of all his miseries.

In another petition, he concludes thus, "I
" beg of you, my Lords, to do me *Justice*.
" *Justice*, my Lords, *Justice!* From your
" prisoner at *Geneva*, *September 22, 1553.*
" *Michael Servetus*, pleading his own cause."

All the Petitions were wrote in *French*. I will give you the last of them intire, which runs thus:

Magni-

Magnificent Lords,

" It is now three weeks since I desired to
 " have an hearing, but could not obtain it.
 " I beseech you, for *Christ's* sake, not to
 " deny me what you would not deny a *Turk*,
 " when I desire you to do me *Justice*. I
 " have several things to tell you, that are
 " very important and necessary. As for the
 " orders you gave, that something should be
 " done to keep me clean, they have not
 " been performed; and I am more miserable
 " than ever. Besides, I am very much trou-
 " bled with *cold*, by reason of my *cholic* and
 " *rupture*; which occasion some other mi-
 " series, that I am ashamed to write. It is a
 " great piece of cruelty, that I should not
 " be allowed to speak, in order to supply
 " my wants. For God's sake, my Lords,
 " give some orders about it, either out of
 " compassion, or out of duty.

" From your prison at *Geneva*, *October*
 " 10, 1553.

Michael Servetus."

The magistrates of *Geneva* (who were
 chiefly directed and managed by *Calvin*, in
 the whole affair) got letters from the magi-
 strates, or ministers, of *Zurich*, *Schaffhausen*,
Basil and *Berne*, to authorize and vindicate
 their proceedings.

M 3

When

When *Calvin* had almost accomplished his design, he wrote a letter to *Farrel*, in which he saith, " I hope *Servetus* will be condemned to death; but I wish the severity of the punishment may be softened." — The common cant of all persecutors and Inquisitors! who first bring innocent persons into distress. And, when they have accomplished their ruine, and deliver up an *Heretic Convict*, to the civil magistrate, to be burnt alive, — desire they would have mercy upon him^o!

However, *Farrel*, in his answer, is for showing no favor; but saith, that *Servetus* deserved to die ten thousand deaths; and intimates that the judges would be very cruel, and enemies to *Christ* and his church, if they did not procede, and make an example of him.

Calvin glories in it, that *Bucer* (though otherwise a moderate man) had said, in his pulpit, concerning *Servetus*, " that he deserved to have his entrails plucked out, and to be torne in pieces." *Bulinger* intimated, that the magistrates acted bravely, and that punishing such obstinate heretics was for the glory of God.

October 26. The judges condemned the unhappy *Servetus* to be burnt alive, the next day,

^o See Dr. *Geddes's Tracts*, Vol. I. p. 412. *Limborch's Hist. of the Inquisition*, translated by Mr. *Chandler*. Mr. *Chandler's* preface to the history of the inquisition; and his history of persecution.

day, together with all his books, both printed and MS. and *Beza* doth not scruple to say, "That it was *according to the opinion of all the Helvetian Churches.*"

Their sentence (after reckoning up the several things alleged against him) concludes thus, — "For this cause, and others, moving us thereunto, desiring to clear the Church of such an infection, and to cut off such a rotten member; having consulted our citizens, and *invoked the Name of God*, to give a right judgment, sitting in the place of our ancestors; having *God* and the *Holy scriptures* before our eyes, saying, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; by this our definitive sentence, which we give in writing, we condemn thee, *Michael Servetus*, to be bound, and carried to the place called *Champel*, and there to be fastened to a stake, and and burnt alive, with thy books, both written with thine own hand, and printed; till thy body be reduced to ashes. And thus thou shalt end thy days, to give an example to others, who would do the like."

"We command you, *our Lieutenant*, to cause our present sentence to be put in execution."

Servetus had attempted several times, during his trial, to have appealed to the *counsel of Two hundred*; who would, perhaps, have

acquitted him. And one of the judges proposed *that*; but he was abused by *Calvin*, who influenced most of the judges, and carried things very much as he pleased.

October 27. being the day appointed for his execution, he desired to see *Calvin*, two hours before he was burnt. *Calvin* went to him, accompanied with two of the magistrates. *Servetus* begged his pardon for all the abusive language he had used towards him; but I do not find that *Calvin* begged his pardon; though he had used as scurrilous language to *Servetus*, and basely and treacherously procured against him the *sentence of death*. He did, indeed, say (when *Servetus* begged his pardon) that he never thought of revenging himself, for the hard words *Servetus* had given him; and intimated, that he had used all gentle methods to convince him of his errors, till he saw they were in vain. *Calvin* likewise exhorted him to pray to God, that he would forgive him, for *having attempted to pluck three Hypostases out of his substance*, &c. but *Servetus* continued stedy in his opinion; and was not moved by any thing *Calvin* could say.

After he was condemned to die, *Calvin* says, he sometimes appeared speechless, and without any motion; sometimes he fetched deep sighs, and at other times again made great lamentations, like a madman; crying out *Mercy, Mercy*, after the *Spanish way*.
When

When he came to the stake, he made no speech to the people, nor shewed any sign of relenting. It is very likely he thought his enemies would not suffer him to speak to the people ^p.

Champel, or *Champey*, a small rising ground, about a musket-shot from *Geneva*, was then the common place of execution; and there the unfortunate *Servetus* expired in the flames; a victim to the resentment of *Calvin*, and the cruel zeal of the magistrates of *Geneva*; and a flagrant instance of the dreadful tendency, and horrible consequences, of *Persecution*, whether found among *Papists* or *Protestants*!

I am, SIR,

Your affectionate, humble Servant

C H A R I S T E S.

^v *Slichtingius* sais, *Servetus* died, calling upon *Christ*, in the midst of the flames. Vid. *Slichting*. in 1 *Johan*. iii. 12.

The

The OLD WHIG, &c.

N^o 160. *Thursday, March 30, 1738.*

To the Author of the OLD WHIG,

S I R,

I, SOME time ago, gave you an account of *Servetus*, and of the treatment which he met with, from several of the *renowned Reformers*.

I would now beg Leave to offer some *Remarks* on the conduct of his adversaries.

One of their methods of hunting down *Servetus* and his opinions, was, by writing *letters*, sounding an alarm, and raising a panic, in various countries, and among people that had never read his books, to excite them to condemn him, before they had heard him speak for himself.

They ascribed to him wicked and dangerous designs, and represented him as *no Christian*; nay, as an *Atheist*; because he did not believe *Christianity*, according to *their interpretation*: (tho' it must be owned that *Servetus* was as ready to call names, as any of his adversaries:— So much did the spirit of *Popery* and the barbarity of the preceding age remain, even in men, who themselves stood in need of the charity and candor of others!) They seized, by violence,

violence, upon *Servetus's* books, and burned them as full of *blasphemy*; whereas he and his friends might, with as much justice, have seized upon their books, and burnt them.

They raked into his whole life and conversation; as if his opinions would have been the lesse true and reasonable, if he had been found to be an immoral man. But, though they could not fix any great immorality upon him, they neverthelesse condemned him; so that his *vices* would have aggravated his *Heresy*; but his *virtue* could be of no service to him.

Another most wicked method of blasting his reputation was, *the misrepresenting* his doctrine, expressing it, sometimes, in their own words, and *fixing their odious consequences upon him*. I mention this the rather, because *bigots* of all parties commonly take this method, that they may represent their adversaries opinions in the most odious light.

They ought to have taken *Servetus's* own words, in order to expresse his sentiments, and not have charged him with several things, which he utterly disowned. And they should, likewise, have let the world read them in his own writings; that they might have been sure they were faithfully represented; — as well as have seen how he supported them. However, they found a different way of treating him to be *proper*, in order to blacken his character, and incense the *people* against him.

But

But the grand source of their cruel treatment of *Servetus*, was a tacit claiming to themselves (what the *Church of Rome* openly lays claim to, *that is*) *Infallibility*. If *Calvin* and his friends had not set themselves up as *Standards of truth and orthodoxy*, what pretence could they have had of prosecuting *Servetus*, for differing from them, and delivering him over to the flames, as a blasphemer, and *Heretic convict*? It is true, they did not openly declare for *infallibility*. But it is evident, by their conduct, they claimed as much deference, among the *Reformed churches*, as the *Pope* claimed among the *Papists*. For, as the latter declares, that *he is always right*, the former were very positive, *they were never wrong*. And he must be very sharp-sighted, that can find out the difference. The truth is, *Calvin* had no more dominion over *Servetus's* faith, than *Servetus* over his; and therefore he set out upon a wrong supposition.

However, as *Calvin* was almost adored by the people, that were *Protestants*; as he had most of the magistrates of *Geneva* at his beck, and very great influence in other cities and states; *Servetus*, a poor exile, could expect no favor. The claiming *Infallibility*, without the civil power to back it, is a mere *Farce*. But, when the sword of the magistrate is at the service of an *infallible Priest*, it exalts him into a *God*, that (like *Moloch*) must be appeased by the blood of innocent victims,

victims, and it is hard to satiate such a *devouring Idol!*

Another fundamental mistake, in the persecution of *Servetus*, was, "that, in consequence of their supposing they were certainly in the right themselves, they thought it their duty to call in the secular arm; and that *magistrates* had a power, given them, from *God*, to intermeddle with religious affairs, and punish men for differing in their *opinions* from the *Great* or the *Many*."

They did not duly consider that, by this argument, the *Protestants*, who were many of them that very year burned in *France*, suffered justly; and that they furnished the *Papists* with an invincible argument, against themselves, wherever the *Protestants* were in their power. Nay, *Calvin* went further, when he incited the magistrates of *Vienne* (who were *Papists*) to apprehend *Servetus*, and burn him, because of his opinions. They would have done as much for *Calvin*, if they had caught him. And, according to his own sentiments, he could have had nothing justly to have objected against them.

But the truth is, "though the magistrate hath a right to punish all such as disturb the peace of society; yet he hath no right to punish peaceable members of society, whatever their *religious opinions* be." *Religion* should ever be carefully separated from civil government;

ment; though ignorant, bigoted, and interested men have generally been for mixing and confounding them, in order to support themselves in wealth and power. *Religion* lies between God and a man's own conscience; and the magistrate ought to protect every one, in his right of choosing his own Religion, of professing it publicly, and worshipping in his own way, without any danger from his so doing. And it ought to be remembered, in honor of *Servetus*, that he so well understood the *Rights of Conscience*, as to declare expressly, "That the sword of the magistrate ought not to be made use of, in matters of *Religion*." — Which the celebrated Mr. *Locke*, and others, have, since that, abundantly shown to be truly *reasonable* and *christian*.

It has been the common method of *Persecutors* and *Inquisitors*, in such cases, to divest themselves of all *humanity*, and mix their own private resentments with their zeal for *orthodoxy*. Had *Servetus* paid a profound submission to *Calvin* and his friends, as *Valentinus Gentilis* did, who was afterwards imprisoned at *Geneva*, for *Heresy*, he would have escaped with his life, as well as the other. But to consult such great *Doctors* about their opinions, and yet dare to differ from them, and to write against them, was not to be indured. Nay, *Calvin* intimates, "that, if he had behaved with any modesty,

" he

“ he should have been spared ;” but *Servetus* would not acknowledge himself convinced, before he was really convinced ; and therefore he fell a sacrifice to the resentments of his *Persecutors* ; who, being resolved upon his destruction, produced private letters, betrayed the secrets of friendship, and scrupled no method to bring him to ruine. For *there is no Faith to be kept with Heretics*. And betraying secrets, and violating friendship, and a thousand other things, which are wicked in themselves, immediately become *virtuous, pious, laudable, and excellent* ; when zealots are to contend for *the Faith*, and support their own *infallible systems*.

His prosecutor was allowed counsel ; but *Servetus*, though *a foreigner*, and a stranger to their methods of proceeding, was an *Heretic* ; and therefore he must have no favor shown him ; nor even *common Justice*.

Malefactors can generally have in prison what may render their confinement more easy, as long as they themselves can pay for it ; but *Servetus* must be starved, amidst cold and nastiness ; and *their Christian charity* denied him the common favors, which are due to all mankind.

What a savage thing is *persecution* ! that can transform men into *brutes*, or *devils* ; and make them deaf to the forceful cries of the miserable, in the most exquisite distresse ? St. *Paul* sais, that of *faith, hope, and charity*, these

these three christian virtues, *the greatest of these is Charity*. But they were of a different opinion from *St. Paul*; and therefore they exalted *faith* above *charity*, and broke the christian laws, to promote *the glory of God*, and drive *Heresy* out of the *Christian church*. They got a number of hands from the neighboring states, to support and vindicate the sentence, which they were going to pass; but neither power nor multitudes can make *Wrong to be right*; and a few may, in some cases, hold the *truth*, when *error* prevails both among the *great* and the *many*.

It would have given me a most exquisite pleasure, to have found the great reformer, *Calvin*, instead of apprehending *Servetus* in *Geneva*, to have got him his liberty, after he had been unjustly apprehended by others; and to have used him, in the same friendly and beneficent manner, that he could have wished to have been treated himself; if he had fallen into the hands of *Papists*, or other *Persecutors*. *Calvin*, being a man of great parts, might have made as good a discourse as he was able, before *Servetus* and all the magistrates of *Geneva*, " in order to have
" shown, how contrary *Servetus's* notions were
" to *Reason* and *Holy Scripture*; and ought
" to have exerted all his eloquence, in pointing out the absurdity of *Persecution*, for
" any religious opinion whatever. If he had
" treated that physician with such humanity,
" it

“ it would have been the most likely way to
“ have induced him to listen to what he had
“ to offer. And, tho’ *Calvin* had not succeeded,
“ in bringing over his adversary, he
“ might nevertheless have convinced him of
“ his *Christian charity* and sincere good
“ wishes; and shown, that (though *Servetus’s*
“ arguments were many of them obscure,
“ and such as he could not see the
“ force of; yet) he retained a sincere good-
“ will to his person, and would recommend
“ it to him to examine his opinions over a-
“ gain; to abstain from all unbecoming ex-
“ pressions, and to take care, lest he should
“ be transported with a violent and indiscreet
“ zeal; — that Almighty God had been very
“ propitious to him, in not permitting him
“ to fall a sacrifice into the hands of *Papists*;
“ who were then *drunk with the blood of so*
“ *many of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus* :
“ — That, for his part, he abhorred *persecu-*
“ *tion*, in all the kinds and degrees of it; —
“ and that he treated *Servetus* with humani-
“ ty, and preserved him out of *Christian cha-*
“ *rity*; which was doing, as he, in a like
“ case, would have desired to be done to
“ him; — that he was glad to see him in a
“ *Protestant* city, where *Liberty of conscience*
“ was daily gaining ground; and among true
“ christians, who *did not desire the death of a*
“ *finer, but rather that he should turn and*
“ *live*. That, if he pleased to tarry with them,
N “ they

“ they would use him with humanity, and
 “ endeavor to protect him from the violence
 “ of his and their common enemies, the vo-
 “ taries of the Church of *Rome*, whose tender
 “ mercies are the most exquisite cruelty.—But,
 “ if he pleased to go elsewhere, they would
 “ leave him intirely at his liberty; and would
 “ rejoice in his welfare, as a fellow-creature
 “ and *Brother-christian*, though he differed
 “ in some of his sentiments from them.”

Instead of writing for *persecution*, and to
 prove that *magistrates ought to put Heretics*
to death, (as *Calvin* has done) I should have
 been much pleased to find a speech, like that
 above, among the works of *that renowned*
man.

The execution of *Servetus* made a great
 noise, not only among the moderate *Prote-*
stants, but even among the *Papists*. The
 former exclaimed against *Calvin*, as being the
 author of *Servetus's* death; and indeed every
 body imputed to him what the magistrates of
Geneva had done, in that affair; — his influ-
 ence was so great in that city, and his enmity
 to *Servetus* so very flagrant! The clamor,
 raised against him on that occasion, forced
 him to write in defence of *Persecution*.—
 However, all were not of his mind. And it
 is greatly to the honor of the *Protestants*,
 that there were many, even at that day, who
 so loudly condemned *persecution*, and attacked
 even one of *Calvin's* great character, for act-
 ing

ing so contrary to the rules of *right reason* and of *Christianity*. This was a most cruel act, and directly repugnant to the gentle, the humble, the charitable and benign spirit of *Christ*; — but perfectly agreeable to the temper of some men, whom I will not name, nor describe, any further than to say, “ That they are for hunting down, with great fierceness, all who dare to differ in opinion from them.”

The bigoted *Papists* would, no doubt, plead that instance of *Servetus*, as a defence of their burning the *Protestants*; and what reflections the more moderate *Roman catholics* made upon it, may be seen in *Father Paul's History of the Council of Trent*, page 387. with whose words I shall conclude.

“ One Hundred Seventy-six persons of quality were burned that year for religion, [that is, in England, under the Popish Queen Mary,] besides many of the common people.—Many were also, at the same time, burned in *France*, for religion; not without the indignation of honest men; who knew that the diligence, used against those poor people, was not for piety, or religion, but to satisfy the covetousness of *Diana Valentina*, the King's Mistress, to whom he had given all the confiscation of goods, made in the kingdom, for the cause of *Heresy*.

“ It

“ It was wondered also, that those of the
 “ new *New Reformation* should meddle
 “ with *blood*, for the cause of *religion*.
 “ For *Michael Servetus*, of *Terragona*, made
 “ a *Divine* of a *physician*, renewing the
 “ old opinion of *Paulus Samosatenus*, and
 “ *Marcellus Anciranus*, [that the Word of
 “ God was not a *Thing subsisting*, and there-
 “ fore that *Christ* was a *pure man*,] was put
 “ to death for it, in *Geneva*, by counsel of
 “ the ministers of *Zuric*, *Berne*, and *Schaff-*
 “ *hausen*. And *John Calvin*, who was
 “ blamed for it, by many ; wrote a book, de-
 “ fending that the *magistrate may punish He-*
 “ *retics with losse of life*. Which doctrine,
 “ being drawn to divers senses; as it is under-
 “ stood more strictly, or more largely, or as
 “ the name of *Heretic* is taken diversly, may
 “ sometimes do hurt to him, whom another
 “ time it has helped.”

I am, SIR,

Your affectionate, humble Servant,

CHARISTES.

TRACT.



TRACT. VIII.

A

D E F E N C E

Of the brief

A C C O U N T

O F

C A L V I N' S

Treatment of SERVETUS,

Against some objections which have been made to it.



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A
D E F E N C E
O F T H E

Brief Account of CALVIN's Treatment of SERVETUS, against some Objections which have been made to it.

O B J E C T I O N I.



SOME have insinuated that the facts are false.

Answer. Upon seeing it proved that the facts are false, by solid proofs and impartial evidence, they shall be otherwise related. 'Till then, they must stand as they are. The evidence of his professed adversaries will not easily be admitted. *Episcopus* (on 1 *John* i. 1. Vol. II, of his works, p. 174. Col. II.) intimates that some represent the followers of *Servetus* as *Arians*. And then adds, — “ Although he

“ seems to have held a very different opinion,
 “ as we may see from *Calvin*. For we have
 “ not been allowed to see *Servetus's* own writ-
 “ tings.”

John Fox (in his *Acts and Monuments*,
 Vol. II. p. 534.) first represents the *Papists*
 as burning those whom they term *Heretics*.

“ And yet (*sais he*) the malignity of those
 “ adversaries doeth not here cease. For, af-
 “ ter that the fire hath consumed their bo-
 “ dies, then they fall upon their books; and
 “ condemn them, in like manner, to be
 “ burned. And no man must be so hardy
 “ as to read them, or keep them, under
 “ pain of *heresie*. But, before they have a-
 “ bolished these books, first they gather ar-
 “ ticles out of them, such as they list
 “ themselves: and so perversly wrest and
 “ wring them, after their own purpose, false-
 “ ly, and contrary to the right meaning of
 “ the author; as may seem, after their put-
 “ ting down, to be most *heretical* and exe-
 “ crable. Which being done, and the books
 “ then abolished, that no man may confer
 “ [or *compare*] them with their articles, to
 “ spie their falshood; then they divulge and
 “ set abroad those articles, in such sort as
 “ princes and people may see what *heretics*
 “ they were. And this is the rigor of their
 “ processe and proceeding against these persons,
 “ whom thus they purpose to condemn and
 “ burn.”

When

When violent men and fierce persecutors have procured the death of one who differs in opinion from them, and have burned his books, I confesse I am greatly inclined to call in question their representations of his opinions; and desire further evidence, concerning the truth and reality of them; or a more fair, candid, and impartial representation of what his sentiments really were.

If his worst opinions are fit to be picked out of his writings and published, in order to be confuted: Why may we not read them in his own writings? Why is he not permitted to speak for himself? Surely every man best understands his own sentiments; and his own writings are the most likely to give one the most just idea of them.

We know very well, that a man's own words may be so quoted, as to represent his opinions in quite another manner, than they appear in his own writings, when read in their proper connection. — How much more, when a word is added, or left out; or another substituted in its place.

What party will allow, that their fiercest adversaries have justly represented their sentiments: notwithstanding they have quoted their very words; and, perhaps, referred to the page, from which they have copied them?

One might mention authors, who, in the heat of controverſie, have misrepresented the

opinions of their adversaries; even while their adversaries have been alive, and their books very common. — What would such have done, with respect to the dead; especially if their books had been burned; and a fair representation of their real sentiments could not have been come at?

Object. II. It hath been inquired, *why is this account published now?*

Ans. To this it may be replied, by another inquiry, which was actually made, by some plain, honest people, in the country, upon their reading *The brief account*. — “Is this true (said they?) And, if it be true, why were we not told of it before?”

Object. III. Why are *Calvin's* faults rip'd up, and his failings thus expos'd to public view?”

Ans. Why has the scripture mentioned the faults of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; and especially of *King David*? Why is it left upon record, that the apostle *Peter* three times denied his Lord and Master; and that at last with oaths and imprecations? Why! but to let us see that some good men have had great faults and blemishes in their characters? And to caution us to beware of those, and like crimes? I acknowledge, *Calvin* helped forward the Reformation from Popery; for which reason I revere his memory. But was *Calvin* a better man than the patriarchs, prophets and apostles? Why then should

should we show more tenderneſſe to his character, than the ſcriptures have ſhown to them and their characters? It is this palliating the vices of great men, and ſhuting our eyes upon their crimes, that has been the ruine of virtue and true religion. If *Calvin* did wrong, in *perſecuting* his Chriſtian brother, let us not ſcreen *Calvin*, but condemn *perſecution* in friend or enemy; leſt it be ſuſpected that we condemn it in our enemies only, but like it in our friends, and thoſe of our own party.

Object. IV. “ *Servetus* called *Calvin* ſeveral hard names, and gave him abundance of ill language; ſo that *Calvin* had received great provocation, by the treatment he had met with, from that worthleſſe man.”

Anſ. It was too much the cuſtom of that age to uſe virulent language in controverſy, and call their adverſaries many hard names. And *Servetus* is greatly to be blamed for his indecent language. But then it ought to be remembered that *Calvin* uſed very harſh language in return; and did not come much behind *Servetus* in calling hard names, and treating his adverſary with opprobrious terms. — And that, about two hours before he was executed, *Servetus* begged *Calvin*'s pardon for all the abuſive language he had uſed towards him: But we do not find that *Calvin* begged his pardon, though he had uſed very coarſe language

language to *Servetus*: And, what is more, had procured against him the most dreadful sentence of being *burned to death*.

However, I think it evident, that a man is not to be burned to death, for having used sharp and unmannerly language, either in conversation or controversy.

Object. V. It has been objected, “That I take the part of *Servetus*, and thereby plainly show that I am of his sentiments. Now, to patronize so vile a wretch, in order to wound the character of *Calvin*, is very amazing.”

Ans. Surely they have not read *The brief account*, who can talk in this manner. I am so far from being of *Servetus*’s sentiments; that, in some respects, I do not well know what his sentiments were. In other particulars, where I do understand him, I greatly differ from him. And there are some of his opinions; which (if his adversaries have represented them justly) I abhor and detest.

He seems to me very often to have had a very confused notion of his subject, and was far from expressing himself intelligibly and clearly. I do, by no means, think that he explained the Scriptures well; or was a solid, judicious critic. But what then? Must a man be burned alive, because he has a confused head? If so, *Lord have mercy upon the multitude! and even upon some persons, who greatly differ in opinion from Servetus!* The more weak

weak and injudicious *Servetus* was, the more should *Calvin* have pitied him; and used him with more humanity and tenderneſſe, in order to have compoſed his mind, and to have brought him to more clear views of what was true and right.

Object. VI. It has been asked, "Have not you gratified the *Papiſts*, by blackening the character of the great reformer?"

Anſ. Did not the *Papiſts* know of this ſtory long ago? Or could it have been concealed from them, ſuppoſe I had not publiſhed it?

However, it is my opinion that, if any of the *Papiſts* read *the Brief Account*, they will not thank me for it, nor be much gratified thereby. For I have intimated that *the Church of Rome* is the mother of perſecution, as well as of many other abominations; that, in her communion, *Calvin* learned his uncharitableneſſe and bigotry; that from thence he derived his perſecuting principles; and that he could not ſhake off that moſt cruel and worſt part of *Poperſy*, when he ſhook off the authority of the *Pope*, and many of their ſuperſtitious and abſurdities.

The beſt way to ſupport *the reformation*, is, freely to condemn all the falſe principles and unjuſtifiable conduct of the *reformers*, and of all other *Proteſtants*; and to defend that alone, which can be defended by right reaſon and ſcripture juſtly applied.

But,

But, if we will defend the faults of *Protestants*, and justifie *persecution* in them; we shall never be able thoroughly to defend the *reformed religion*; and overthrow the persecuting, uncharitable principles of the *Church of Rome*.

Object. VII. "Attacking *Calvin*, in this manner, is insinuating that all his followers are of his principles; and would persecute those that differ from them, if it were in their power."

Ans. I do not believe that all *Calvinists* are of his persecuting principles, nor have I intimated any such thing. But such as are guilty, of all sects and parties, I thought it my duty to condemn. And I would willingly hope that, if any *Calvinists* have been of their *Master's* narrow sentiments hitherto, they will consider to what lengths such a temper may possibly lead them; and thereby be induced to throw off such a bigoted, narrow, and unchristian spirit ¹.

Object.

¹ Mr. *Emlyn* (in his reply to Mr. *Martin*, &c. p. 253.) says, "That *Beza's* annotations were printed by *Stephens*, at *Geneva*, at a time and place, flaming with bitter zeal and prejudice against all *Antitrinitarians*; where *Servetus* had been cruelly burned at the stake, but three years before, at the instigation of *Calvin*. And *Beza* was so full of it, that, in these very annotations, he could not forbear justifying the fact. Having mentioned *Servetus's* standing in his opinions even to death, [in his note on 2 Pet. i. 4.] he adds an ironical scoff, not much lesse cruel
"than

Object. VIII. "Should you have published the faults of our great reformer, at a time when *Christianity itself* is so boldly struck at; and all the principles of religion so daringly called in question?"

Answer. One thing, which has increased the number of *infidels*, has been the *Christians* making use of so many *pious frauds*, and winking hard at the faults of persons of their own way; while they have opened their eyes wide upon the mistakes and foibles of those of a different party.

If ever we would defend our *common Christianity* effectually, and answer the *Antirevelationists* to any good purpose, we must give up those *principles* and *practices* which cannot be fairly defended, and hold fast those alone which may be supported by *truth* and *evidence*.

It is now above 200 years since the commencement of *the reformation*. Is it not, then, a shame and a reproach to *protestants* of all denominations, that there should yet be among them any pretences to infallibility;

or

"than his death itself; *sunt tamen, qui magnam bono viro injuriam putant factam; i. e. yet, good man! some think he had great wrong done him.*"

Now, in my edition of *Beza* (printed at Cambridge 1642.) I have the pleasure to find, that this bitter sarcasm is left out. And, from thence conclude, that *Beza*, upon mature consideration, saw he had gone too far; and that it was no wonder, *some thought that Servetus had great wrong done him.*—All such retractions are very commendable.

or any remains of bigotry and *persecution*; the very worst part of *Papery*? That the free, noble and generous spirit of *benevolence* and *liberty* has not yet had an universal spread among them; and rooted out the *spirit of persecution and uncharitableness*, in all the kinds and degrees thereof? If such a spirit and temper were diffused among us and prevailed, the more sober and considerate enemies of *revelation* would be more ready to hearken to what we have to say. And, as to the body of them, who have never read the *Bible* through, with any tolerable care and attention; who wish *Christianity* may be false, because it is convenient for them that it should be so; inasmuch as it condemns their vices, and threatens them with a righteous judgment to come, and a terrible hereafter; — when we had gained the more virtuous and judicious, such loose and abandoned persons, would either be put out of countenance, as having nothing plausible to say in their own vindication; — or they would show mankind, *That they are against revelation, purely because revelation is against them.*

At a time when *all religion* is so boldly struck at, we ought not to load *religion* with the pretended power and authority of any man, or number of men. We ought to content ourselves with being *Christians*, and not lift ourselves into a party, and glory in the name of particular *heads and leaders.* One

alone

alone is our master, our head and our Lord, viz. *Jesus Christ*; and we should glory in his name only: We should take our religion from his word, and make that the sole standard.— Then should we bring about *the most glorious reformation, ideed!* not by burning of *heretics* (i. e. of persons who differ from us, no more than we differ from them) not by hunting down those whom we cannot convince; — but by the force of evidence, and in the spirit of love and meeknesse; by kind treatment, invincible arguments, and inoffensive, holy and exemplary lives. Then would *the glorious spirit of liberty and charity* flow in every vein, and beat in every pulse; the most *godlike benevolence* warm every heart, and influence every action. Then would *the salvation of God be nigh unto them that fear him, and glory dwell in our land!* mercy and truth would meet together: *righteousnesse and peace would imbrace each other!* Truth would spring out of the earth, and *righteousnesse* look down from heaven!

This is a *reformation* devoutly to be wished for, by every humane and virtuous man! *A spectacle, which God might look down upon with pleasure!* A reformation, which would bring glory to God on high, peace on earth, and the most extensive benevolence among men!

God

210 *A Defence of the Account of, &c.*

God grant that it may be effected, and
take place speedily; not only in our happy
island, but over the face of the whole globe!
And may every creature, in heaven and on
earth, with one unanimous, applauding voice,
say, *Even so, Amen!*



TRACT.

TRACT. IX.

A BRIEF

A C C O U N T,

OF

Archbishop *L A U D*'s

Cruel TREATMENT of

Doctor *L E I G H T O N*.

TRACT IX.
A BRIEF
ACCOUNT
OF
Archbishop LINDSEY
AND HIS TREATMENT BY
DOCTOR ELI GHTON.



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A B R I E F
A C C O U N T
O F

Archbishop *LAUD*'s cruel Treatment of Doctor *LEIGHTON*.

IT has been objected that I have published *Calvin's* treatment of *Servetus*, because I dislike *Calvin's* peculiar sentiments.

Answer. I have deferred the consideration of this objection 'till now, that I might answer it by itself, and more at large.

As for my agreement with, or differing from, the principles of *Calvin*, I only take the same liberty with him, that I do with every other fallible man; *i. e.* I agree with him, as far as I apprehend he agrees with *right reason* and *scripture*; but, where I apprehend he differs from them, I look upon it as my duty to differ from him, and frankly and honestly to declare my sentiments.

P

I will

I will take away no man's liberty from him; neither shall any man, with my consent, take away my liberty from me. I call no man *Master*, upon earth. *Jesus Christ*, and he alone, is my master, and my guide. *Fathers* and *councils*, *antients* and *moderns*, are all alike to me. In what I think them right, I follow them; in what I think them wrong, I make no scruple of rejecting their opinions. No venerable names shall induce me to imbrace what I apprehend to be false. No branded names shall deter me from receiving what appears to me to be true.

But, to show that I like *persecution* no better in an *Arminian* than in *Calvin* himself, I will set before the reader a brief account of *Archbishop Laud's* treatment of *The Reverend Alexander Leighton*, D. D. * father to the pious and excellent *Archbishop Leighton*, whom *Bishop Burnet* so highly applauds, in *the history of his own life and times*.

In the year 1629. during the session of parliament, Dr. *Leighton* published a book, which gave great offence. The occasion of his writing it

* See *Rushworth*, p. 55. *Oldmixon's History of the Stuarts*, Vol. I. p. 110. N. B. Mr. *Oldmixon* copied his account from a MS. drawn up by Dr. *Leighton* himself, which was presented to *Parliament*. See also Mr. *Pierce's Vindication*, &c. p. 177, &c. Mr. *Neale's History of the Puritans*, Vol. II. p. 217, 218; 385, 386. Mr. *Chandler's Introduction*, prefixed to his translation of *Limborck's History of the Inquisition*, p. 81, &c. His *History of Persecution*, p. 367, &c. And his *two Letters to Dr. Berriman*.

it was this, *The high-commission court*, and the *spiritual courts*, had rendered Dr. *Laud* (who was then *Bishop of London*) and his brethren, odious to the nation; and therefore several gentlemen and citizens went to Dr. *Leighton's* house, in *Black-Friars, London*, to desire him to draw up articles against the oppression of those *Prælates*;—which, after much persuasion, he did. And those articles, with his expatiating upon them, made up a book, which he intitled, *An appeal to parliament, or Zion's plea against Prælacy*. He was then desired to go beyond sea and print it: which he would not do; 'till several pious, learned, and judicious divines and gentlemen (some of whom were members of parliament) had seen it; and he had about 500 hands set to it, by way of approbation.

Then Dr. *Leighton* went abroad, and returned to *England*, after some time, with some printed copies of that book; which was printed at his own great expence and losse. Two copies of it were delivered to *the parliament*, two days before they were dissolved. And, when it came to be perused, it was found that he had spoken, not only with freedom, but with very great rudeness and indecency, against *Bishops*, calling them *men of blood*; and saying, “ We do not read of a
“ greater persecution, and higher indignities,
“ against God's people, in any nation, than
“ in this, since the death of Queen *Eliza-*

“*beth.*” He called the *Prælacy* of the Church, *Antichristian*; he spoke vehemently against the *Canons* and *ceremonies*; and said, “That the Church hath her laws from the *Scripture*, and that no King may make laws for the *house of God.*” He called the *Popish* queen, a *daughter of Heth*: and concluded with saying, “What pity it is that so ingenuous and tractable a King, should be so monstrously abused by the *Bishops*, to the undoing of himself and his subjects?”

The warmth and freedom of these expressions is not to be justified; yet let the benevolent and unprejudiced reader judge, whether they bear any proportion to the sentence, that was passed, and executed, upon him.

Not long after the book had been delivered to the *parliament*, two *high-commission pursuivants* arrested Dr. *Leighton*, as he was coming out of *Black-Friars Church*, from hearing a sermon: and, with a multitude of staves and bills, dragged him to the house of Dr. *Laud*, then *Bishop of London*. As they were carrying him along; they, all the way, called him by the opprobrious names of *Jesuit* and *Traytor*. In the *Bishop of London's* house, he was imprisoned, and a strong guard set over him. There he was kept, without food, till seven in the evening; when Dr. *Laud*, *Bishop of London*, and Dr. *Corbet*, *Bishop of Oxford*, came from *Fulham-House*, with a great number of attendants. Dr. *Leighton* then

then demanded an hearing: and one of the pursuivants made as if he should have had one. But, instead of that, the goaler of *Newgate* was sent for, who came with a strong power of halberts and slaves; and claping Dr. *Leighton* in irons, they carried him through a blind, hollow, subterraneous passage into *Newgate*; where opening a gate into the street (which some say had not been opened since the days of *bloody Queen Mary*) they thrust him into a loathsome and ruinous dog-hole, full of rats and mice; which had no light, but what came through a little grate. There, the roof being uncovered, the snow and rain beat in upon him. He had no bedding, nor any place to make a fire, but the ruines of an old, smoaky chimney. There he was kept, without meat or drink, from tuesday night to thursday noon.

In that doleful place and condition was he kept close, with two doors fastened upon him, for the space of 15 weeks. And so long they suffered no friend to come near him. But, after 15 weeks, his wife, and she alone, gained admittance.

On the fourth day after his commitment, the high-commission pursuivants, under the conduct of one of the Sheriffs of *London*, and attended with the Sheriffs men, went to Dr. *Leighton's* house in *Black-friars*, under pretence of searching for *Jesuits* books. There those sons of plunder laid violent hands upon

his distressed wife, and used her with such barbarous inhumanity and indecency, as it is a shame to expresse. They rifled every person in the house; and held a pistol to the breast of a boy of five years of age, threatening to shoot him, if he would not tell where the books were; — which so affrighted the poor child, that he never recovered it all his days. They broke open presses, chests and boxes, though the family would readily have opened them, to have facilitated their search. They tore up the very boards of the house, and destroyed every thing at their pleasure. They robbed the Doctor's house, and carried off all the books and MSS. they could find. They, likewise, carried away his household-stuff, apparel, arms, and other things, leaving nothing which they had a mind to have: though Mrs. *Leighton* put them in mind, that a day of reckoning might come. They also took away a great number of Dr. *Leighton's* books from one Mr. *Archer*, with whom they had been deposited for greater security.

The keeper of *Newgate* denied Dr. *Leighton* a copy of his commitment. Upon which, his wife, with some other friends, repaired to one of the Sheriffs of *London*, offering bail, according to the statute in that behalf; which statute being shown, by an attorney at law, the sheriff replied, *He wished the laws of the land, and the privileges of the subject, had never been named in parliament, &c.*

The

The creatures of the high-commission-court went to Dr. *Leighton* in *Newgate*, and would have examined him; but he refused to answer them, or acknowledge the authority of *that court*; though he professed himself ready to answer any officer, who came to examine him, by the king's authority.

Thus Dr. *Leighton* (having already suffered in body, liberty, family, estate and house) at the end of fifteen weeks was served with a *subpœna*, on information, laid against him by Sir *Robert Heath*, his Majesty's attorney-general, who went to him in *Newgate*; and (as Dr. *Leighton* himself expresses it) *used him with cruelty and deceit*. Afterwards one *Reeves*, another tool of *Bishop Laud's*, went to *Newgate*, and, with flattering, deceitful promises, got Dr. *Leighton* to confesse, that he wrote the book he was charged with. After that, he went again to *Newgate*, and would have had Dr. *Leighton* to have confessed who put him upon writing the book; promising him not only pardon, but other favors, if he would frankly tell him. But Dr. *Leighton*, like a brave man, would not mention one of near 500, who had set their names to his book, by way of approbation; as knowing the miseries, to which he would have exposed them by such a nomination. Upon that refusal, he was brought into the *Star-chamber-court*, and required to put in an answer to a long invective, called an in-

P 4 *formation.*

formation. Which he did, to the satisfaction of all unprejudiced persons. He owned the writing of the book, but said that it was done with no ill intention; his design being only to lay these things before the next *parliament*, for their consideration.

But things were carried with so high an hand, that no council dared to plead for him, nor any body to appear in his behalf.

There were other circumstances, which discovered the inveterate malice of his enemies. It did more than appear to four physicians, who examined the case, that poison had been given to Dr. *Leighton*, in *Newgate*. For his hair and skin came off, in a distemper, which was attended with loathsome symptoms. But, notwithstanding a certificate was given under the hands of those four physicians, and an affidavit made by an Attorney, that his disease was desperate, — and it was unfit to bring him into court, yet nothing would serve *Bishop Laud*; but, in the midst of that desperate disorder and great distresse, the following sentence was passed upon him, though absent; and that court unanimously decreed, *June 4, 1630*. “ That
 “ Dr. *Leighton* should be committed to the
 “ prison of the *Fleet* for life, and pay a fine
 “ of 10,000 l. (*though they knew he was not*
 “ *worth so much*) that the high-commission
 “ should degrade him from his *ministry*; and
 “ that then he should be brought to the pil-
 “ lory

“ lory at *Westminster*, while the court was
“ sitting, and be whiped. After whiping,
“ be set upon the pillory, a convenient time;
“ and have one of his ears cut off, one side of
“ his nose slit, and be branded in his face,
“ with a double S. S. for *a Sower of Sedition*.
“ That then he should be carried back to
“ prison; and, after a few days, be pilloried
“ again in *Cheapside*; and be there likewise
“ whiped, and have the other side of his
“ nose slit, and his other ear cut off; and
“ then be shut up, in close prison, for the
“ remainder of his life.”

That pious, merciful, and truly Christian
Bishop, Dr. *Laud*, pulled off his cap, when
this horrible sentence was pronounced, and
gave God thanks for it; — like one who had
obtained a signal victory over his most mortal
enemy.

A Knight moved one of the Lords about
the dreadful nature of the sentence, intima-
ting that it opened a gap to the Prælates, to
inflict such disgraceful punishments and tor-
tures upon men of quality. That Lord re-
plied, “ It was only *in terrorem*, and that he
“ would not have any one think that the
“ sentence should ever be executed.” But
Bishop *Laud* was resolved it should be exe-
cuted, and accomplished his cruel intention.

Between passing the sentence and the exe-
cution of it, Dr. *Leighton* found means to
escape out of the *Fleet prison*; by the assist-
ance

ance (I suppose) of two Scots gentlemen, Mr. *Elphinstone*, and Mr. *Anderson*. For they were fined 500 l. a piece, for helping their countryman to flee from that infernal punishment. However, Dr. *Leighton* was overtaken in *Bedfordshire*, and brought back to the *Fleet*.

November 26, part of the sentence was executed upon him, and that in a most tremendous manner; the hangman having been plied with strong drink, all the night before; and likewise threatened, if he did not execute the sentence in a cruel manner.

When he came to the place of execution, besides other torments, his hands were tied to a stake, where he received 36 stripes on his naked back with a triple cord, every lash whereof brought away the flesh. Then he was set in the pillory, in which he stood almost two hours in cold, frost and snow. While he was in the pillory, one of his ears was cut off, one of his nostrils slit, and one cheek branded with a red hot iron, with the letters S. S. So that he was made a dismal spectacle of misery to God, to angels and to men.

After that, he was remanded to prison; and the next cruel handling of him we may take in the words of *Bishop Laud*, who has recorded both the executions in *his diary*. "On that day se'night, his sores upon his back, ear, nose and face, being not yet cured,
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“ he was whiped again, at the pillory, in
“ *Cheapside* ; and had the remainder of his
“ sentence executed upon him, by cutting off
“ the other ear, fliting the other side of his
“ nose, and branding the other cheek.”

Being so broken with such terrible sufferings, he was unable to walk. However, the warden of the fleet would not suffer him to be carried in a coach ; but hurried him away, by water, to the *Fleet* ; to the further indangering of his life.

In that prison, he went through much harsh and cruel usage, for the space of eight years ; paying more for a room than the value of it ; and not being allowed a bit of bread, or drop of water, but what he or his friends paid for. And, to increase the misery of that unhappy man, the *Clerk of the Fleet* once sent for him to his office, and (without warrant, or any fresh offence given) set eight strong fellows upon him, who tore his clothes, and bruised his body, so that he never was well after ; and then carried him, head and heels, to that loathsome place, the common goal ; where (besides the filthiness of the place and vileness of the company) various projects were set on foot to take away his life.

Thus the reader has some account of Dr. *Leighton's* remarkable sufferings : but many particulars are not recited, for the sake of brevity.

In

In the year 1640. he presented a petition to the *long parliament*, setting forth a brief narrative of his great and many sufferings and hardships. — While the petition was reading, *the house of Commons* burst out into tears. And *the Clerk of that house* was ordered to stop, once and again, till they had given some vent to their compassion; and recovered themselves to such a composure of mind, as to be fit to attend and hear the rest.

When they had considered the case, they released him from prison, and voted that Dr. *Laud*, then *Archbishop of Canterbury*, should give satisfaction to Dr. *Leighton*, for the damages sustained, by 15 weeks imprisonment in *Newgate*, upon the said Bishop's warrant, &c. They likewise voted, that the fine of 10,000 *l.* the sentence of corporal punishment, the execution thereof, and the imprisonment thereupon, were all illegal. — But no sufficient reparation, in this world, could possibly be made to a man so highly injured.

Dr. *Leighton* was of a low stature, of a fair complexion, and well known for his learning, and other abilities. And he must have had an excellent constitution to have lived so long, under such cruel treatment. But his long and close confinement (added to his other sharp sufferings) had so impaired his health; that, when he was released, he could hardly walk, see, or hear.

The

The sufferings of that learned man moved the compassion of the honest and unprejudiced people; and a brief recital of them melted the house of Commons into tears: but Bishop *Laud* could pull off his cap, and devoutly thank God, when that cruel sentence was passed: and could likewise coolly meditate upon it, in his closet; and record the terrible execution of it, very minutely, in his diary; though the humane and compassionate spirit of his great Lord and Master, would have taught him to have abhorred such cruelty in others; and much more to have kept at the utmost distance from being the chief cause and author of it, himself.

Thus have I set before my reader another instance of *Protestants* persecuting of protestants: Such an instance this! as the records of the detestable court of inquisition can hardly furnish an example of greater cruelty.

The Church of Rome, indeed, seems to be incurable. And the instances of the most barbarous cruelty there, so many and so aggravated, that there is no occasion for me to recite any particular instances of that kind. Let the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*; let *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, of old; let *Italy*, *France*, *Spain*, and *Portugal*; let the East and West *Indies*, at present; let the whole world, wherever they have had power, stand up, and be witnesses to *Popish cruelty*.

As

As for *Protestants*, they have not formerly been so guilty as *the Church of Rome*; nor am I afraid of their ever becoming so guilty.

However, to root out all remains of this leaven, it is right to hold up to their view some of the worst instances of this kind, which have happened among them; that posterity may avoid their fore-fathers faults; that *persecution*, in all the kinds and degrees of it, may be utterly detested and abhorred; and that persons of various parties may behave like *Christians*, one towards another: and, though they cannot all think alike, they may nevertheless preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and love.

As to *Persecution*, “ it is the off-spring of
 “ hell; tramples upon the sacred and invio-
 “ lable rights of conscience; invades the pre-
 “ rogative of the most high God; roots up *fair*
 “ *Liberty*, the greatest blessing upon earth;
 “ spreads terror and devastation all around;
 “ and, by its baseful influence, blasts every
 “ thing within its reach.”

As a friend, therefore, to the civil and religious liberties of mankind, and to the glory and honor of God, the benevolent maker and governor of the world; — I would do all the little that is in my power, to banish *Persecution* from off the face of the earth, and to diffuse the spirit of peace and love, which is the temper and blessing of the pure and happy mansions of immortality!

TRACT.



TRACT X.

AN

ESSAY

CONCERNING

The belief of things, which are *above*
reason.

IN A

DIALOGUE

Between

THEOPHILUS and PYRRHO.



THE HISTORY OF THE

TRACT

ESAY

CONCERNING

The belief of things, which are words
reason.

DIALOGUE

THEOPHILUS AND PHILIP



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Concerning the belief of things, which are
above reason.

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Between

T H E O P H I L U S and P Y R R H O.

 H E O P H I L U S and *Pyrrho* (who had spent so much time, in conversing about *the reasonableness of the Christian Religion, as delivered in the Scriptures*) continued the same friendly regards as formerly; and freely imparted their sentiments to each other, upon all subjects that occurred.

One evening, they were talking over public affairs. And *Theophilus* was expatiating upon the insolence and boundless ambition of such tyrannical and aspiring monarchs,
Q who

who can sacrifice the lives of thousands to their pride and vanity; who care not how many are made widows or orphans; how much trade languishes; how much the course of law is stoped; and how many towns and countries become an heap of desolation and ruine; especially where the seat of war happens to be; — or how much all the liberal arts and sciences languish, amidst the found of arms, and the hoarse voice of war.

Have such ambitious monarchs no bowels? no humanity? none of the tender sentiments, and kind affections? I hope the time approaches, when they shall receive a proper rebuke; and be disabled, at least for one generation, from molesting the surrounding nations! and disturbing the repose and tranquillity of *Europe*!

But *Pyrrho* stoped *Theophilus*, in the midst of his pathetic oration; and gave a turn to the conversation, by saying, He knew that moral and religious subjects were most agreeable to his friend *Theophilus*: That there was one interesting subject, on which he had touched in his *reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, &c. and in *the Appendix*; that what he had there said, was intirely satisfactory to some: But that others either hesitated, or absolutely denied the truth of what he had asserted.

When *Theophilus* was going to inquire, what he referred to; *Pyrrho* said, He had lately

lately received a letter from a friend of his, who corresponded with him, upon many occasions; that the letter was intirely upon the subject he now refered to; and that therefore he would read it, if *Theophilus* pleased.

Theophilus gratefully accepted of his offer; upon which he read, as follows.

Dear S I R,

“ **W**HEN I have no news to impart,
 “ I collect what materials I can, of
 “ any other kind; to show how desirous I
 “ am to keep up a correspondence with you.
 “ An ingenious Gentleman of my acquaint-
 “ ance, whom I will call *Novatianus*, was
 “ in company with the lady *Aspasia*; who
 “ was exclaiming bitterly against a certain
 “ preacher, whose historical name shall be
 “ *Eusebius*. For *Eusebius* had asserted some-
 “ thing, in one of his sermons, which gave
 “ the lady great offence. Upon which she
 “ condemned him, with a warm zeal, and
 “ great fluency of speech; and declared, *she*
 “ *would never bear him more, as long as she*
 “ *lived*. This occasioned the following dia-
 “ logue between her and my friend.

“ *Novatianus*.] What was it, Madam, in
 “ *Eusebius*’s sermon, which offended you so
 “ much?

“ *Aspasia*.] He asserted that *we are to be-*
 “ *lieve nothing but what we can understand*.

“ *Novatianus.*] Was that the thing, which
 “ gave you so much offence?

“ *Aspasia.*] Yes, Sir, and enough too. I
 “ wonder how any body can venture to af-
 “ fert such a thing.”

“ So far the dialogue proceeded; and then
 “ they conversed, for an hour or two, about
 “ other matters; by which mean, this af-
 “ fair was quite forgot. Then *Novatianus*
 “ begged the favor of a pen and ink, and a
 “ small piece of paper; all which a servant
 “ readily brought him. Upon the paper, he
 “ wrote down the following words in *Greek*,
 “ ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπῃ ἐστίν. and then very gravely
 “ gave them to the lady, and desired her to
 “ read them. That revived the dialogue,
 “ which proceeded as follows: — *Aspasia*,
 “ looking first upon the paper, and then
 “ looking earnestly, and with surprize and
 “ confusion, in *Novatianus*’s face, said, Sir,
 “ I cannot read them. What do you mean
 “ by this? It is not *English*, and they are
 “ strange letters to me. I cannot imagine
 “ what you design, by asking me to read
 “ what I know nothing about. *Novatianus*
 “ gravely said, Do you believe them, Ma-
 “ dam?

“ How can I (answered *Aspasia*, with
 “ great quickness) unlesse I understand
 “ them?

“ Hold,

“ Hold, Madam, (replied *Novatianus*)
 “ you may, surely, believe things which you
 “ cannot understand.

“ *Aspasia*.] That is impossible.

“ *Novatianus*.] Then I find that you are,
 “ after all, of *Eusebius*’s opinion; notwith-
 “ standing his sermon offended you so much.
 “ This startled the lady, and caused her to
 “ say; *I professe, I believe I am wrong*. The
 “ thing never appeared to me in this light
 “ before. I really begin to suspect that I
 “ was mistaken, and that *Eusebius* was in
 “ the right. I beg his pardon for condemn-
 “ ing him, before I had duely considered the
 “ reasonableness of what he said. But what
 “ is the meaning of these words? For I can-
 “ not so much as read them.

“ *Novatianus* said, I will assure you, Ma-
 “ dam, they are the words of holy Scrip-
 “ ture; and that according to the original.
 “ They contain a plane truth; and a very
 “ great and important truth. I would,
 “ therefore, have you try, once more, whe-
 “ ther you cannot believe them; before you
 “ understand them. *Aspasia* was now im-
 “ patient to have them explained; and said
 “ to *Novatianus*, Teaze me no longer. I
 “ freely acknowlege, that I was too rash and
 “ inconsiderate; and I am now fully con-
 “ vinced that I cannot tell, whether I be-
 “ lieve what you propose to me, or no; till
 “ I understand what is meant thereby. Pray

Q 3

“ tell

“ tell me, therefore, what the words signify ; and keep me no longer in suspense.
 “ As soon as I understand them, I will then
 “ tell you frankly, whether I believe them,
 “ or no.

“ Well then (said *Novatianus*) I will gratify you, by telling you that you may
 “ find the passage, 1 *John* iv. 8. and the
 “ *English* of it is, *God is love*.

“ That proposition (said *Aspasia*) I most readily and firmly believe ; but I find that
 “ I could not believe it, till I understood
 “ it. I heartily beg *Eusebius*’s pardon, and
 “ sincerely condemn mine own folly and
 “ imprudence, in censuring what I ought
 “ to have applauded. I will promise you,
 “ I will go and hear him again ; and shall
 “ now have a better opinion of him than
 “ ever.

“ The next time, that *Novatianus* visited
 “ *Aspasia*, she continued of the same mind ;
 “ and severely condemned herself ; but applauded *Eusebius* : and thanked *Novatianus*, for taking so kind and ingenious a
 “ method of leading her into right sentiments upon that head. But was ready to
 “ wonder, that she had not, before that,
 “ seen the matter in the same light ; — as it
 “ appeared so very obvious, now she had attended to it, and carefully considered it.

“ I know, my friend, *Pyrrho*, that you
 “ are a speculative man ; and will make reflections

“ flections on such a story, which would not
“ occur to others. — Instead of news there-
“ fore, or businesse, I thought it might not
“ be amisse to send you this story. If it
“ can afford you any useful hints, it is
“ at your service. If not, accept it as a tes-
“ timony of my being ready to oblige you.

I am,

Yours, &c.

When *Pyrrho* had read this letter, *Theophilus* said, that *Novatianus* had acted like a man of sense; and that he had clearly shown that *men cannot believe what they do not understand*. How! (said *Pyrrho*) is it possible that *Theophilus* and I should think so much alike, upon such a subject? Yes (said *Theophilus*) and I further apprehend that, when the terms are explained, and persons of different sects and parties understand one another upon this head, they are more agreed, than is at first imagined. *Pyrrho* could hardly be persuaded of this; and alleged, that it was the opinion of the *infidels*, that *men must understand before they can believe*; and he observed, that they commonly charged *Christians*, and even *divines*, with being of the contrary opinion. You know very well, *Theophilus*, that *The Author of Christianity not founded on argument* has, in a sneering manner, said. “ Though men cannot be all of

“ one opinion, they may of *one faith*; which
 “ they hold, not in unity of understanding;
 “ but (as our *Liturgy* well expresses it) *in the*
 “ *bond of peace and unity of spirit.*”

And again, “ I am fully persuaded, that
 “ the judging at all of religious matters is not
 “ the proper province of *reason*; or, indeed,
 “ an affair where she has any concern.”

I need not point you out more passages to
 the same purpose, in an author, which you
 have so much studied.

The Author of Christianity as old as the Cre-
ation [p. 199, &c. of the 12^{mo} edition,] says,
 “ If I do not understand the terms of a pro-
 “ position; or if they are inconsistent with
 “ one another; or so uncertain, that I know
 “ not what meaning to fix on them; here is
 “ nothing told me, and consequently no
 “ room for belief.—But, although designing
 “ men very well know, that it is impossible
 “ to believe, when we know not what it is
 “ we are to believe; or to believe an absurd,
 “ or contradictory, proposition; yet they;
 “ because, without examination, people may
 “ be brought to phanfy they believe such
 “ things; and it being their interest to con-
 “ found mens understandings, and prevent
 “ all inquiry; craftily invented the notion of
 “ believing things *above reason*. Here the
 “ ravings of an *Enthusiast* are on a level with
 “ the dictates of infinite wisdom, and non-
 “ sense is rendered most sacred: Here a con-
 “ tradition

“ tradition is of great use to maintain a doctrine; that, when fairly stated, is not defensible: Because, by talking backward and forward, by using obscure terms, and taking words in different senses, they may easily amuse and puzzle the people.

“ On this foundation, *Transubstantiation* is built; and most of those mysterious propositions; about which, in former days, *Christians* so frequently murdered each other. But, if the *Scripture* was designed to be understood, it must be within the reach of the human understanding; and consequently it cannot contain propositions, that are either above, or below, human understanding;” &c.

I need not repete more of that author's words. What has been mentioned, sufficiently points out his meaning.

Theophilus said, that *rational divines* did not appear to him to think differently on that subject; though it was the mean, unworthy, and ungrateful method of those, who wrote against *revelation*, frequently to throw out the most severe reflections upon those very persons, from whom they have learned all the best principles they have.

How can it be the interest of *divines* of learning and integrity, to confound mens understandings, and prevent all inquiry? Or who have done more to promote *freedom of inquiry*; or made a better use of it; than some

some of the most celebrated divines of our own nation?

It is allowed, on all hands, that a single idea cannot be the object of assent or dissent. But, when a proposition is laid before us, and we are required to believe it; it is necessary we should understand the words, in which it is expressed, or delivered. Your friend, *Novatianus*, has clearly shown that, as long as it continues in an unknown language, we can neither believe, nor know, any thing about it.

But, suppose we understand the words, in which any proposition is expressed; or have in our minds the ideas signified by those words; it does not follow from thence, that we must immediately believe that proposition to be true. No doctrine of *divine revelation* can possibly contradict any principle of reason, or be inconsistent with it. Neither can any two doctrines, or propositions, in divine revelation be contradictory to, or irreconcilable with, one another. In such cases, the things proposed cannot be any part of *divine revelation*; though some persons may assert them to be so. Or, if the words, in which they are expressed, be contained in the divine writings, we may depend upon it, we have not yet found out the right meaning of those words.

If a proposition be self-evident, or we perceive the truth of it, by *intuition*; or, if it
be

be proved, by a train of undoubted propositions, each of them ranged in a proper order, and connected with one another, which is termed *demonstration*; then we do not call that *faith*, but *knowledge*. If there be only probable arguments for the truth of any proposition, we call that *opinion*. If a proposition is supported by credible testimony, the assent to that is properly called *faith*. If it be the testimony of man, it is *human faith*; if it be the testimony of God, it is *divine faith*.

But, in all these cases, it is impossible to assent to that, of which we have no ideas. For that would be to believe we know not what. And, if we have credible testimony, or some other good arguments, then we have a *reason* for believing; otherwise we believe we know not why. And we ought, in all such cases, to suspend our belief, or withhold our assent.

Pyrrho said, I think I clearly apprehend your meaning, which I would expresse in mine own way: and I desire you would set me right; if, in any particular, I have mistaken you.

There are two parts in every proposition, a *subject* and a *predicate*; which are united in an affirmative, or separated in a negative, proposition. Now we must have the ideas affixed to the words, which expresse the *subject*, and the *predicate*; or understand the
subject;

subject; and what is affirmed, or denied, concerning that subject. And we must, likewise, have the testimony of God, or of some credible person, for joining those two ideas together, in an affirmative proposition; or separating them in a negative proposition. And, without understanding the words, and having that, or some other, *reason*, for assenting to the proposition which they expresse, we can neither understand, nor believe any thing about them.

Theophilus acknowledged, that *Pyrrho* had spoken exactly agreeable to his sentiments, on this subject.

But *Pyrrho* was a man given to argue on all sides; in order to have a full view of the subject, or to see what could be alleged for, or against, any opinion. He therefore, told *Theophilus*, that the matter must not drop thus. For, though they seemed to be agreed; there were several, who would not fall in so readily with their conclusion; and therefore he desired they might further debate the matter. *Theophilus* asked him what he had to say against a thing, which seemed so plain and obvious?

Pyrrho answered, that he had often heard *divines* say, that, in *Scripture*, several doctrines are represented as *mysteries*; and that seemed inconsistent with the notion now advanced, viz. *that we must understand things, before we can believe them.*

Theophilus,

Theophilus, with great coolness, said, I acknowledge freely that the New Testament often speaks of *mysteries*; but then that world, in *Scripture*, never signifies what is incomprehensible, or unintelligible.

I have carefully examined the sense of the word [*mystery*,] in all the places, where it is used, in the New Testament. And I am well satisfied, it never signifies *an unintelligible truth*; but *a fact*, which was formerly a *secret*, but is now made known. And, when made known, it is very plain and easy to be understood. Accordingly, the apostle speaks of a very plain and intelligible fact; when he declares, “that the Christians, who shall be found alive at Christ’s second coming, shall not die; but be suddenly changed into immortal, without dying.” And, in delivering that truth, he says, *Behold, I show you a mystery*. And, in other places, the same apostle talks of *making known the mystery of the gospel*. The truth of the case is, the Gospel is not an *hidden*, but a *revealed mystery*; made known to the world, to enlighten their understandings, to lead them to the practice of universal righteousness; and thereby, to their true dignity, perfection and happiness.

In the next place, *Pyrrho* alleged, that *Divines* had often asserted, “that we may, and ought to, believe things *above reason*, though not contrary to it.”

Theophilus

Theophilus replied, that there were two senses, in which this proposition may be interpreted. The one is, that *faith*, or what is reveled as the object of faith, contains some things which *human reason alone, and of itself*, could not have found out; but if known, at all, must be discovered by *revelation*. For instance, “that men are to be raised from the dead; that *Jesus Christ* is to judge the world.” And in this sense, I suppose, all, who acknowledge *divine revelation*, are agreed, that some of the objects of *faith* are above *human reason*; or (in other words) that there are some things discovered in the *Bible*, which could not have been known to men, unless they had been communicated by *divine revelation*.

But there is another sense, in which *faith* has, by some, been affirmed to be *above reason*; viz. that men may, and ought to, believe things, which they cannot understand, or comprehend. And, in this sense, I look upon the assertion to be groundlesse and false: And that, in this sense, *Faith* can no more be *above reason*, than it can be *contrary to it*.

Pyrrho proceeded, in his objections, and said, There are numberlesse things, which exceede our capacity; or which are unintelligible and incomprehensible to us, at least in the present state; and yet we firmly believe them; though we do not understand them; and therefore it is plane we may believe things which we do not understand.

Theophilus

Theophilus desired *Pyrrho* to name one of those many propositions, which he believed, though he did not understand it.

Pyrrho replied that, as to giving an account of his own faith, he desired to be excused; and that he was not a *Divine*, sufficiently learned and profound, readily to mention such a proposition. He intimated further, that he was representing the sentiments of others; and that he had frequently met with this objection.

Theophilus acknowledged that there are many things, which we do not understand. But then (said he) as long as we do not understand them, they are the objects, not of *our faith*, but of *our ignorance*. For, as long as we understand them not, the assenting to them, is, in effect, assenting to nothing; and that is, in reality, no assent at all.

Well but, *Theophilus*, (said *Pyrrho*) will you not allow that there are many things, which we actually and firmly believe; though we cannot comprehend how they are effected; or do not understand the mode, or manner, of their existence, with all their relations, connections, and circumstances? For instance, we believe that God made the world; though we do not know how he made it. We believe that the soul and body of man are united, and mutually influence one another; though we do not know how they are united, or how body and spirit can have
such

such a mutual influence. We believe that God will raise the dead; but how he will do it, that we understand not, neither can we at present comprehend. And many more like instances might be named.

Theophilus replied, that the same answer might be returned to this objection, as to the last, *viz.* As far as we believe, so far we must have ideas; and that, where our ideas end, there ends our assent, or faith. Unless we understand what is meant by these words [*God created the world,*] how could we talk, or think, about such a thing? Unless we had the ideas affixed to the words [*body and spirit,*] we could not talk of their union. And, if we have no meaning to such words, then to say, *they are united*, would be to talk of the union of nothing with nothing. So likewise, we know what is meant by a man's being dead; and raised, or brought to life, again; otherwise we should mean nothing, when we speak of the resurrection from the dead. To believe that God made the world, is to believe a thing, that is both comprehensible and highly reasonable. Who should make the world, but God? Such an extensive and complicated, such a wise and glorious, production must needs have been the effect of the most consummate wisdom, goodness and power; exerted immediately by the first cause and original author of all; or by some being, that has derived his power from the first cause. From the visible creation, we are naturally

turally led up to the invifible caufe and author of all ; and here is nothing incomprehenfible in all this.—*That God made the world*, is one propofition. *How he made it*, would be another and a quite different propofition. The firft we believe and underftand. The latter we know and underftand nothing of. The laft, therefore, is not the object of *our knowlege*, or of *our faith*, but of *our ignorance*. *That the foul and body of man are united*, in one propofition. *How they are united*, would be another, and a quite different propofition. The firft we underftand and believe. The latter we know nothing of. This laft therefore, again, is the object of *our ignorance*, not of *our knowlege*, or *faith*. — That men are to die, and that *Jesus Chrift* will raife them from the dead, or bring them to life again, are propofitions contained in Scripture ; and they are both very plane and intelligible. *How Jesus Chrift will raife the dead*, is another and a quite different propofition, which God hath not feen fit to revele to us. We are not, therefore, required to know, or believe, any thing about it.—The fact, in all thefe cafes, is one thing ; the mode, or manner, is another and a quite diftinct thing. The former we underftand and believe. The latter we neither underftand, nor believe ; for we know nothing at all of it.

Pyrrho faid,—*Theophilus*, fuppofe that God fhould tell you, *that a thing is fo and fo* ; will you not believe it, unleffe he acquaint

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you

you with the mode or manner of it? How it is effected, or how it exists? Or how it is reconcilable with all the other truths, you are acquainted with? *Theophilus* answered, as far as God reveles any thing, so far he explains (or discovers) it. And whatever God sais, I am very ready to assent to it; for that very reason, that God hath said it. Because whatever God sais, must be true. But I must understand what is said, as well as be satisfied that the discovery came from God; before I can believe it *as a divine revelation*. If God reveles any thing with its mode and manner, and all its relations and circumstances; then I believe that, with its mode and manner, and all its relations and circumstances. If God reveles part of a thing; as far as God reveles it, so far I believe it. *Secret things belong to the Lord our God*. They are his peculiar, and we have nothing to do with them. They cannot, therefore, be the objects of our knowlege, or of our faith.

Whatever contradicts a known truth, or is irreconcilable with it, that cannot possibly be part of *a divine revelation*. As long as I think it inconsistent with any known truth; so long I must either reject it, or suppose that I have not yet the true meaning of the words, in which it is delivered. Where our ideas are clear, there our faith may be clear. Where our ideas are confused or obscure, there our faith must necessarily be confused

or

or obscure. Where our ideas are adæquate, there our faith may be adæquate. Where our ideas are short, or partial; there our faith must be partial, or extended only to part of a thing. But where we have no ideas at all, there we can have no faith at all.

Pyrrho smiled and said, Surely, *Theophilus*, you are a strange man; and I could hardly have believed it of you. What! will no objection stand before you? Nor any thing prove to you, *that men may believe what they cannot understand?* I have one objection more, which so modest a man, as you are, will scarce know what to say to. And that is, that *fathers* as well as *moderns*, *doctors* and *bishops*, *philosophers* and *divines*; eminently learned, great and good men, have contended for believing things, which we do not understand. And surely, such wise and good men could never all be mistaken; neither can it be supposed that they would have contended for this opinion, unless there had been truth and reason in it.

You yourself have acknowledged that *Tertullian* said of one article, "I believe it, because it is impossible." And that bishop *Beveridge* has assigned it as a reason for his believing another article of faith, "That he 'could not conceive, or understand it'."

R 2

Theophilus

^c See *The Reasonableness of the Christian religion*, &c. p. 132, &c.

Theophilus observed that, in mentioning such particulars, he had made his remarks upon them; which plainly showed he greatly disapproved of such obnoxious expressions. But *Pyrrho* said that, to show those mentioned were not singular, he could produce other celebrated persons, to confirm their opinion.

"St. *Austin* often cites what he had read in the 70, and vulgar Latin, [*If you do not believe, you shall not understand,*] to infer from it, that we must believe divine truths, before we understand them. And the croud of Popish writers follow him, to authorize a blind and *implicite faith*."

Theophilus replied, "If St. *Austin* had had an exact translation of that passage, he had only read, *unlesse you believe*, [*viz. that the kingdoms of Assyria and Israel shall shortly be destroyed,*] *you shall not be established*."

Pyrrho owned that those, he had already quoted, were, indeed, *divines*: And he observed, that the author of *Christianity as old as the Creation* had insinuated that, "it was their interest to confound mens understandings, and to prevent all inquiry; and therefore they have craftily invented the notion of believing things *above reason*."

But

* See an essay for a new translation of the Bible, p. 63.

But there are others, who have contended for the same thing.

You have quoted Lord *Bacon* as saying something very like it. And “there have been others, as well as *divines*, persons of excellent judgment, and great friends to free inquiry; and who were never suspected of a design to impose upon, and confound, men’s understandings; — that yet have thought it just to admit the notion of *things above reason*. I shall mention only two more, both of them *lay-men*, of eminent note for their attempts to inform and improve men’s understandings, and promote useful knowledge, Mr. *Boyle* and Mr. *Locke*.

“That excellent philosopher, the great and good Mr. *Boyle*, has written a treatise, which he calls *a discourse of things above reason*; inquiring whether a philosopher should admit there are any such. To which are annexed some advices about judging of things said to transcend reason.

In that discourse, he ranks things above reason, under three heads. The first is, of things whose nature is such, that we are not able distinctly and adæquately to comprehend it. Such is the almighty God; whose perfections are so boundless, and his nature so singular, that it is presumption to

R 3

imagine,

* See *The reasonableness of the Christian religion*, &c. p. 132.

“ imagine, that such finite beings, as our
 “ souls, can frame full and adæquate ideas
 “ of them. The second sort consists of
 “ things; which have properties and ways of
 “ operation, which we cannot intelligibly ac-
 “ count for, or explaine, by any thing we
 “ already know. The third sort is, of such
 “ things that involve some notion, or proposi-
 “ tion; that we see not how to reconcile
 “ with some other thing, that we are persua-
 “ ded to be truth; and which are incum-
 “ bred with difficulties and objections, that
 “ cannot directly and satisfactorily be re-
 “ solved. All these he calls *privileged things*;
 “ because they surpasse *our reason*; at least
 “ so far that they are not to be judged of,
 “ by the same measures and rules, by which
 “ men are wont to judge of ordinary things.
 “ Accordingly, he puts it among the advices
 “ he gives, in judging of things that transcend
 “ our reason, that a matter of fact, or other
 “ truth, about *privileged things*, being proved
 “ by arguments, competent in their kind, we
 “ ought not to deny it; merely because we
 “ cannot explaine, or perhaps so much as
 “ conceive, the *modus* of it; or because we
 “ know not how to reconcile it to some-
 “ thing that is true; or because it is liable
 “ to ill consequences, and is incumbred with
 “ great inconveniences. All these things he
 “ admirably illustrates and supports, by a
 “ variety of instances, well urged, from *Phi-*
 “ *losophy*

“ *losophy* and *natural Theology*. And con-
“ cludes, with observing, that we must not
“ expect, as to *privileged things*; and the
“ propositions, that may be formed about
“ them; to resolve all difficulties, and an-
“ swer all objections; since we can never
“ directly answer those, which require, for
“ for their solution, a perfect comprehension
“ of what is infinite.”

Here *Pyrrho* made a pause; but *Theophi-*
lus desired him to procede with what he had
to allege from Mr. *Locke*; and then he
would make remarks upon all his examples
at once.

Well then (said *Pyrrho*) “ The other
“ person I refer to, is the acute and sagacious
“ Mr. *Locke*; whom I suppose *The author*
“ of *Christianity as old as the Creation* would
“ not reckon among *those designing men*,
“ whose interest it is to confound men’s under-
“ standings. He divides things into those
“ which are according to reason; those things,
“ which are contrary to reason; and those
“ things, which are above reason. And these
“ things, when reveled, he makes to be the
“ proper matter of faith. [See *Essay on hu-*
“ *man Understanding*, Book IV. Chap. XVII.
“ §. 23, and Chap. XVIII. §. 7; 9.] He
“ frequently sets himself to point out the
“ shortnesse of human understanding; and
“ how unable we are to comprehend or ex-
“ plane things; of which yet we have an

“ undoubted certainty. Of these, he gives
“ various instances. Among other things,
“ he instances in the very notion of *body*;
“ which is incumbered with some difficulties,
“ very hard, and perhaps impossible, to be
“ explained, or understood, by us. The
“ divisibility *in infinitum*, of any finite ex-
“ tension, involving us, whether we grant,
“ or deny it, in consequences impossible to
“ be explicated; or made, in our apprehen-
“ sion, consistent. And he would fain
“ know, what substance exists, that has not
“ something, which manifestly baffles our
“ understandings. [See *Essay on Human*
“ *Understanding*, Book II. Chap. 23. and
“ Book IV. Chap. 3. See also his works,
“ Vol. I. Page 557; 559, 560, 561; 572.]
“ He allows, therefore, that it cannot be a rea-
“ sonable foundation, for rejecting a doc-
“ trine, proposed to us, as of divine revela-
“ tion, — that we cannot comprehend the
“ manner of it; especially, when it relates
“ to the divine essence: and declares, con-
“ cerning himself, I gratefully receive, and
“ rejoice in, the light of *divine revelation*;
“ which sets me at rest, in many things,
“ the manner of which my poor reason can
“ by no means make out to me. — I readi-
“ ly believe whatever God has declared,
“ though my reason find difficulties in it,
“ which it cannot master.” [Ibid. p. 361;
573.]

Pyrrho said, he had now done; and declared, that he would not have dwelt so much upon the sentiments of such great men, if some learned and ingenious persons had not laid so much stress upon them.

Theophilus answered, when an argument is fetched from the sentiments of some wise, great and good man, whose authority we reverence, and hardly dare oppose, the *Logicians* call it. *Argumentum ad verecundiam*, *An addresse to our modesty*. And one would not be very forward, in directly contradicting, or opposing, men eminent for wisdom and piety. But yet, this argument may be carried too far; and prevent all farther inquiries and improvements whatever. We justly reverence the names of men of piety and learning, in former ages. But (you know) I have already declared that "their notions
" are nothing to us, any further than they
" are supported by *reason* and *scripture*. We
" call no man *master* upon earth. We
" allow no man to *have dominion over our*
" *faith*. Churches and councils, fathers and
" moderns, learned men and celebrated di-
" vines have erred, and their determinations
" are not to be implicitly received."

The church of Rome says, "what! are you
" wiser than all your fathers?" And they quote great names and many authorities. But *Protestants* do not much regard such arguments against *scripture* and *common sense*. And even *Papists* themselves are not much moved

moved by such *fathers*, or authorities, as contradict their sentiments. — Mr. *Boyle* and Mr. *Locke* were truly great and good men. But they were not infallible. I suppose, in some particulars, they were both mistaken. And persons, who in this point shelter themselves under their authority, would not, in all points, be determined by their opinions; or declare that they believe, in every particular, as those great men believed. And, if they had in this point been mistaken, or talked confusedly; it would not therefore be true, or more clear, and evident, *that we can believe what we cannot understand*. I would, indeed, as soon be determined by their authority, as that of most men that can be named. But, *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato; sed magis amica est veritas*.

All this I have said, upon the supposition, that Mr. *Boyle*, or Mr. *Locke*, had differed from me; and said, that *we must believe things which we cannot understand*.

Whereas I do not apprehend that they have said any such thing, or differ from me upon this head. They have neither of them said more than this, *viz.* that we must believe some things, which we cannot adequately comprehend; or that have properties and ways of operation, for which we cannot intelligibly account; or that there are some difficulties relating to them, which we cannot solve. — Now, wherein does this differ from

from what I have already said; unlesse in the manner of expression? Have I not said, that,
 “ Where our ideas are clear, there our faith
 “ may be clear. Where our ideas are ob-
 “ scure or confused, there our faith must ne-
 “ cessarily be obscure or confused. Where
 “ our ideas are adæquate, there our faith may
 “ be adæquate. Where our ideas are short, or
 “ partial; there our faith must be partial, or
 “ extend only to part of a thing. But where
 “ we have no ideas at all, there we can have
 “ no faith at all?”

I have likewise freely allowed, that we may understand, or believe, a thing; without understanding the mode or manner, relations and circumstances, of it. But, where our ideas end, there our faith must end. And can you allege any thing, from Mr. *Boyle*, or Mr. *Locke*, that contradicts this? How often has Mr. *Locke*, in particular, intimated that it is impossible to judge of, or assent to, any thing, without having some idea of it? And he concludes his *Chapter of faith and reason*, thus, — “ To this crying up of *faith*, in op-
 “ position to *reason*; we may, I think, in a
 “ good measure ascribe those absurdities, that
 “ fill almost all the religions, which possesse
 “ and divide mankind. For men, having
 “ been principled with an opinion, that they
 “ must not consult *reason*, in the things of re-
 “ ligion, however apparently contradictory
 “ to common sense, and the very principles
 “ of

“ of all their knowlege; have let loose their
 “ phansies and natural superstition; and have
 “ been by them led into so strange opinions,
 “ and extravagant practices, in religion; that
 “ a considerate man cannot but stand amazed
 “ at their follies, and judge them so far from
 “ being acceptable to the great and wise
 “ GOD; that he cannot avoid thinking
 “ them ridiculous, and offensive to a sober,
 “ good *man*. So that, in effect, *Religion*;
 “ which should most distinguish us from
 “ beasts; and ought most peculiarly to ele-
 “ vate us, as rational creatures, above brutes;
 “ is that, wherein men often appear most
 “ irrational, and more senselesse than beasts
 “ themselves. *Credo, quia impossibile est; I*
 “ *believe, because it is impossible*; might in a
 “ good man passe for a sally of zeal; but
 “ would prove a very ill rule for men to
 “ choose their opinions, or religion, by.”

From hence you plainly see, that this
 great and good man is on my side of the
 question; and has, in other words, asserted
 and defended what I am now contending
 for.

Pyrrho (with a smile) said, you will have
 things your own way. But let us not con-
 clude the conversation upon this subject, till
 we have considered of what advantage it may
 be to mankind, to have this matter set in a
 clear light.

Theophilus

Theophilus was well pleased with that proposal. For he had a very great aversion to all dry and barren speculations; which may serve to amuse men, but cannot profit them.

I know (says he) some will look upon this as a dry and uselesse subject; but, to more judicious and considerate persons, it will appear to be a subject of vast extent and great usefulness.

Pyrrho asked, how that could be made appear?

Theophilus answered, that requiring men, upon pain of damnation, to believe some things, which they cannot understand, was the ready way to unhinge, disturb, and perplex the minds of many weak, but honest and well-meaning, persons. God himself is no hard master. He never requires impossibilities, as the terms of salvation; why then should men require such things, or represent God as requiring them? Why should they confound the understandings of the weak; who are easily imposed upon, and led astray? All that God requires, is, that men should assent according to evidence; make their faith a *reasonable service*; and be influenced, by it, to holiness of temper and life. The terms of acceptance are plane and easy; and the minds of good men ought not to be puzzled, and confounded, with dark,
unin-

unintelligible and incomprehensible speculations.

That indeed (said *Pyrrho*) seems to be a matter of some consequence. But what have you further to allege?

Theophilus replied, that the making men phansy they can believe what they cannot understand, must be of bad consequence, as it leads them to *Enthusiasm*, which is a most dangerous thing in religion. I own that “ here
“ the ravings of an enthusiast are on a level
“ with the dictates of infinite wisdom; and
“ nonsense is rendered most sacred: That
“ here a contradiction is of great use to maintain a doctrine; which, when fairly stated, is not defensible; because, by talking
“ backward and forward, by using obscure
“ terms, and taking words in different senses,
“ they may easily amuse and puzzle the
“ people. On this foundation, *transubstantiation* is built; and most of those mysterious propositions; about which, in former days, men so frequently murdered
“ each other.”

The *rational Christian* first understands, then considers the evidence, and then believes. The *enthusiast* has a much quicker way (as he phansies) to come at *his faith*. He has inward feelings and divine impulses. He has knowledge and conviction, darted into his mind, all at once; such clear knowledge, and strong, irresistible evidence, as satisfies himself;

himself; but is insufficient to satisfy any other person: Because it is incommunicable, and he cannot explain to another the nature and evidence of his faith; what it is he believes, or why he assents to it. He has a strong persuasion, grounded upon the conceit of *inspiration*; without clearly understanding what he believes, or professes; and without any rational or sufficient evidence, on which to ground his assent. To what absurdities must such a person stand exposed? He may believe *transubstantiation*, or any thing else. For, as in the dark, all colors are alike, so in his dark mind all the most wild and fanciful conceits, that can be named, may be entertained and zealously contended for; as the great and deep things of God, and the fundamental doctrines of religion. One absurdity, firmly and tenaciously adhered to, makes way for a thousand. For, if you will be so obsequious as to profess your belief of one thing, which you do not understand, and for which you have no evidence; why not a second, and a third, and so on? When a man is got out of the reach of his own understanding, and into the dark labyrinths of error and enthusiasm; when he renounces his *reason* to follow *phantasy*, appetite, or inclination; inward feelings, or imaginary impulses; he can have no ground for the soles of his feet to stand upon; but seems to be bewildered and gone, beyond recovery.

Pyrrho

Pyrrho observed that the man was in a bad way, who had gone that length, and that he heartily pitied him.

Ay (sais *Theophilus*) he is to be pitied; and so are all they who live around him. For, when a man phantasies that he can believe what he cannot understand, it leads him from enthusiasm into *bigotry* and *uncharitableness*. He is not to be argued with, and treated, like a rational creature. Nor is he satisfied, that he may enjoy his own unreasonable, blind and implicate faith; but his zeal hurries him on, to make converts; and to persuade others to believe, or at least to talk, as he does; — that is, without evidence, and without understanding. And, generally speaking, the more dark and unintelligible any points are, the more warmly and fiercely he contends for them. *Where the iron is blunt, he puts to more strength*, to make it cut, and wound, and destroy. The senseless and ridiculous doctrine of *transubstantiation* has occasioned the shedding the blood of more *Protestants*, than all the great and weighty matters of *the law*, and of *the gospel*.

When a man has reason and evidence for what he sais, he is ready to propose them; and that is the best way to make converts, among the sober and thinking part of mankind. For, when you have convinced an honest man's understanding, you may be sure of him. But, when a man holds ridiculous

culous opinions, and makes them fundamental articles of faith; if you deny them, or even doubt, you are reprobate, or in a dangerous state; and must be consigned over to everlasting damnation. As if these zealous defenders of the faith had got the keys of the bottomlesse pit, hanging to their girdles; and could open or shut the gates of the dark, infernal prison, at their pleasure. But, blessed be God, pronounce it who will, *the curse causelesse shall not come.* Those, who love God, and understand and believe as well as they can, shall, none of them, be rejected by the righteous and equitable judge of the universe;—though they may have been mistaken in some points of opinion; and though their over-zealous neighbors should bestow their uncharitable censures upon them; load them with hard names, and use them unkindly here, or consign them over to the misery of the world to come.

Pyrrho observed that *Theophilus* painted strongly, and spoke with a becoming pathos; but hoped that he could not charge the contrary doctrine with many more bad consequences.

Yes (said *Theophilus*) I have two more, which I propose to mention; and then I will detain you no longer. — The first is, That, to contend for believing what we cannot understand, is neither more or lesse than contending for implicate faith, and greatly favors

the wretched cause of *the Church of Rome*. That most crafty and corrupt church has done all, in her power, to put out mens eyes, that they might not see; and to confound their minds, that they might not understand. She has, frequently and in many places, prohibited the free use of *the Scriptures*; taken away that key of knowlege; and neither entered into the true design and interpretation of those sacred writings herself; nor suffered those, who were willing, to enter in. She has stiled ignorance *the mother of devotion*. And what wonder! when ignorance is so much the support of that antichristian Church? She has devised the monstrous and nonsensical doctrine of *transubstantiation*; and burned great numbers at the stake, for not believing without ideas; nay contrary to *sense*, and *reason*, and the current of *holy scripture*. Methinks, I should be sorry to see any *Protestants* so far doing the work of *Papists*, as to take men off from a diligent and impartial inquiry into the grounds and reasons of their faith; or, in the least, to discourage the close and critical examination of the sacred writings; or the free, honest and open profession of a man's sentiments; after he has inquired. You know (*Pyrrho*) how warm and animated my zeal against *Popery* has always been; because I have ever looked upon it, not only as the greatest corruption of Christianity; but even a combination of a wicked faction against
reason

reason and common sense; as well as against the rights and liberties of mankind. And, in proportion, I dislike all tendencies thereto.

Pyrrho could not imagine what the other bad consequence of implicate faith could be. For *Theophilus* had already named more than had occurred to him, before the mention of them. But *Theophilus* put him out of his pain, and said that he had a tender concern for the well-meaning part of *Pyrrho's* old friends; though he abhorred their principles.

What friends of mine do you mean, (said *Pyrrho*, with some eagerness) for I do not yet understand you? *Theophilus* let him know, that he designed those gentlemen, who are inclined to *infidelity*. And that, as to all those, who are men of integrity and good morals, he should be sorry to do any thing to lead them to infidelity, or to establish them therein. And that he could not but think that, to contend for believing what we cannot understand, was the way to tempt thinking men to infidelity. Not that the *Bible* itself pleads for such a faith. But the ridiculous notions and groundless opinions and arguments of some *Jews* and *Christians* have furnished those, who have wrote against *revelation*, with their most formidable objections.

It is a pity, indeed, that such persons have not looked further; and examined the *Scriptures* themselves. But, on the other hand,
the

the friends of revelation should be very careful, not to lay stumbling blocks in the way of those, who are perhaps but too ready to be pleased, when they can find any advantage against their adversaries. However, if all the friends of revelation had been of my sentiments, and as frankly declared their minds; neither Dr. Tyndal, nor any of his brethren, could have flourished and triumphed on this head, as they have done.

Pyrrho thanked his friend for the pains he had taken in his behalf; and said that, by parting with what cannot be defended, and separating the chaff from the pure wheat, the friends of truth would be best able to satisfy their own minds; and to give the most thorough and lasting satisfaction, unto all other attentive and well-minded persons.

T H E E N D.

